Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Another CCC complaint vs IPI

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Acting executive director Andrew Yeom of the Commonwealth Casino Commission has filed another complaint against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC before the CCC, this time over IPI's failure to pay the $3.1 million annual regulatory fee that was due last Oct. 1.

» For failing to pay $3.1M regulatory fee

Yeom, through assistant attorney general Michael L. Ernest, filed two claims against IPI for violation of the Commonwealth Code and CCC regulation, a claim for breach of contract, and a claim for declaratory order.

IPI general counsel Michael Dotts said yesterday that he will submit IPI's answer to CCC's complaint tomorrow, Friday.

Yeom

Ernest

Yeom asked the CCC to declare that IPI committed the violations and did not immediately self-report to CCC the facts that gave rise to the violations prior to being contacted by a CCC enforcement officer.

He asked the CCC to declare that the violations committed by IPI in the first three claims are major violations pursuant to CCC regulation, and for CCC to suspend IPI's license to conduct gaming

See CCC on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Oct. 15, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,170	96	3,266
Recovered	2,189	1	2,190
Active	919	96	1,015
Deaths	60	1	61
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			56,564

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	77	0	77
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			19,345*

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The community-based testing has been temporarily suspended.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Pandemic leaves A. Samoa residents stranded, homesick

Makerita Iosefo-Va'a and her husband Shaun Va'a sit together in a park near a relative's home where they are temporarily staying in Tracy, Calif., on Oct. 8, 2020. AP

By FILI SAGAPOLUTELE and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (AP)—Makerita Iosefo Va'a hasn't been home for nearly eight months—the longest she's ever been away from American Samoa.

She longs for the breezes that cool island humidity and the ocean sounds and smells that permeate her home in the village of Tula. She also misses the food that's impossible to recreate in Tracy, California, where the coronavirus pandemic has left her and her

See A. SAMOA on Page 4

COURTHOUSE PROJECT
Construction of a COVID-19 Screening and Security Zone in front of the Guma Hustisia is ongoing to provide a place where visitors to the building will first undergo screening. Services regularly provided at the entrance's intake counters will be relocated to the second floor of Marianas Business Plaza. The construction project started on Oct. 13, 2020. NEIL FAMA

Bar gauges Inos, Naraja, Govendo performances

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Bar Association is currently evaluating the performance of CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice Perry B. Inos and Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja and Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo, who are all on the ballot in the November general election for retention on the bench.

Hodson

CNMI Bar Association president Charity R. Hodson said yesterday that the evaluation results will not be tabulated until the deadline for submissions expires tomorrow, Friday.

"Thereafter, we will

See BAR on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Teppanyaki of Hyatt Regency Saipan opened its doors for small and private get-togethers.

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ASIA
The speaker of the Philippines' House of Representatives has resigned, ending a standoff with a rival.

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ENVIRONMENT
A group of NMC students are training at Obyan Beach to be the "eyes" of the reef in the CNMI.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

RUMOR CONTROL:

There is no 'murderer' on the loose

The CNMI Department of Public Safety has recently been made aware of a social media post regarding an alleged "murderer on the loose" in the village of Chalan Kanoa on Saipan. This post is false and misleading, DPS said in a statement yesterday.

In the interest of transparency, DPS has provided the following details of the case: On Sept. 16, 2020, at about 10:34pm, DPS received a call regarding an unresponsive individual in Chalan Kanoa. Police officers who were immediately dispatched to the scene met with the victim's son, who stated that they noticed their father lying outside their door and thought the victim had been drinking and was just drunk. After realizing that the victim had no pulse, he called for emergency assistance. Police and emergency medical personnel responded to the scene. As with all unresponsive cases, this case was handed to the Criminal Investigative Bureau for further investigation.

A few days later, Sept.22, 2020, DPS requested for a toxicology report through the Office of the Attorney General. After consulting with the chief prosecutor, an autopsy was suggested to rule out any foul play. The autopsy was conducted on Sept. 24, 2020, by Dr. Phillip Dauterman at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. morgue. On Sept. 26, 2020, DPS officers in charge of the case met with Dauterman, who told them of his findings.

Dauterman concluded that the individual had died of natural causes due to heart failure. Although the individual did have a bruise on his forehead, the autopsy concluded that it was not enough to be a cause of death. Police have already met and have briefed the family members in this case.

DPS reminds the public to be vigilant when obtaining information through an online source. "During this pandemic, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the coronavirus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the official government sources such as DPS and the Office of the Governor," the statement added. ***(PR)***

Torres: Talks needed on safety rules during All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has underscored the need for the COVID-19 Task Force to talk with Diocese of Chalan Kanoa Bishop Ryan Jimenez with respect to safety protocols during the traditional public gathering in cemeteries during All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day on Nov. 1 and 2.

Speaking at his regular radio news briefing last Tuesday, Torres said it is important for COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña to sit down and have a dialogue with Jimenez, because some parts of the United States and even the CNMI's neighboring islands have cancelled these traditional gatherings.

He assured that he will abide by whatever recommendations Villagomez and Muña consider to be safe for the community.

Torres said he believes that they will be having more discussions on how the government can safeguard the community on Nov. 1 and 2.

At the same press briefing, Villagomez acknowledged that there's quite a few concerns from the community about the All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day gathering.

Villagomez assured that the task force and Muña will be working with Jimenez and the Catholic clergy to determine what things need to be done. "We've been talking about this and its mental and social importance to our people," he said in acknowledging the importance of Nov. 1 and 2 to many people.

Villagomez said one recommendation is that since there are multiple celebrations on that day, they could just limit or minimize the number of people in cemeteries or turn the event into a virtual commemoration using a big screen.

"There are different means that we can consider," said Villagomez, adding that they will be talking about this more with Jimenez and Muña. He said they will also listen to the recommendations of experts.

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Candidates at a Glance

The Saipan Tribune will be coming out with a supplement,

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SSA sets 1.3% benefit increase for next year

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 1.3% in 2021, the Social Security Administration announced yesterday.

The 1.3% cost-of-living adjustment will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2021. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on Dec. 31, 2020. (Some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the consumer price index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to $142,800 from $137,700.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be able to view their COLA notice online through their personal *my* Social Security account. People may create or access their *my* Social Security account online at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Information about Medicare changes for 2021, when announced, will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, Social Security will not be able to compute their new benefit amount until after the Medicare premium amounts for 2021 are announced. Final 2021 benefit amounts will be communicated to beneficiaries in December through the mailed COLA notice and *my* Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola. ***(PR)***

Power outage in Garapan on Saturday

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Saturday, Oct. 17, from 5am to 9am from the Kristo Rai Church and Upper MIHA, to the Best Sunshine casino site and the northern side of Chinatown.

This will enable linemen of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to replace the wooden primary pole near the HANMI Hardware on Middle Road with a concrete pole. In addition, CUC linemen will need to phase Feeder 3/Kiya 3 airbrake tie switch by rearranging the Feeder 1 primary conductors. Because of the scale of work that will be done, CUC asks travelers to take alternative routes or to exercise caution when driving through the working area.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline at 236-4333. ***(PR)***

TRIPLE J
35th ANNIVERSARY
SALES EVENT
HYUNDAI mazda MITSUBISHI

2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
9,130 MILES · STK: 18HS860
SALE PRICE $15,995
KBB: $19,059

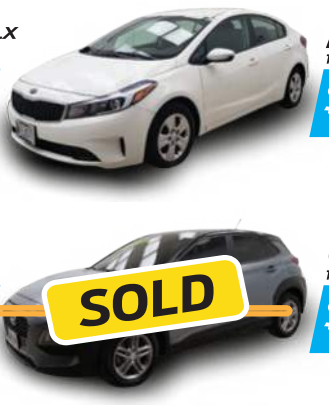
2016 MAZDA CX-5 GT AWD
16,017 MILES · STK: 6HS752
SALE PRICE $19,995
KBB: $24,639

2015 FORD EXPEDITION PLATINUM
12,534 MILES · STK:5HS735
SALE PRICE $31,995
KBB: $40,936

$0 DOWN *ON APPROVED CREDIT ★ QUALITY USED CARS ★ MANY VEHICLES BELOW COST

2017 HYUNDAI ACCENT GLS
16,979 MILES · STK:7HS824
SALE PRICE $11,995
KBB: $13,650
SOLD

2018 KIA FORTE LX
10,808 MILES · STK:18HS919
SALE PRICE $14,995
KBB: $17,676


2019 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SPORT
11,901 MILES · STK:20D135-A
SALE PRICE $19,995
KBB: $20,391

2017 HYUNDAI ACCENT GLS
39,201 MILES · STK:7R220
SALE PRICE $11,995
KBB: $12,682

2019 HYUNDAI KONA L
21,017 MILES · STK:9R240
SALE PRICE $16,995
KBB: $16,992
SOLD

2016 MAZDA CX-5 GT
15,346 MILES · STK:6HS785
SALE PRICE $19,995
KBB: $24,640

2016 TOYOTA COROLLA LE
31,135 MILES · STK:9D0030-A
SALE PRICE $13,995
KBB: $15,507
SOLD

2019 HYUNDAI KONA GL
16,715 MILES · STK:9R234
SALE PRICE $17,995
KBB: $18,850

2018 HONDA CIVIC EX-T
9,993 MILES · STK:18HS935
SALE PRICE $21,995
KBB: $22,425

2015 MAZDA MAZDA3 HATCHBACK
56,995 MILES · STK:5R219
SALE PRICE $14,995
KBB: $15,460

2018 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL
19,001 MILES · STK:BC56820
SALE PRICE $17,995
KBB: $18,322

2019 MAZDA CX-5 SPORT
6,450 MILES · STK:19C001
SALE PRICE $23,995
KBB: $24,230

2018 KIA FORTE HATCHBACK LX
9,422 MILES · STK:18HS918
SALE PRICE $14,995
KBB: $18,614

2016 KIA SEDONA LX
30,887 MILES · STK:16HS717
SALE PRICE $18,995
KBB: $19,955

2018 HONDA CIVIC EX-T
8,507 MILES · STK:18HS942
SALE PRICE $24,995
KBB: $24,026

2019 KIA SOUL WAGON
10,356 MILES · STK:19HS937
SALE PRICE $14,995
KBB: $18,094
SOLD

2017 MAZDA CX-3 GT AWD
13,201 MILES · STK:17C002
SALE PRICE $19,995
KBB: $21,583

2019 MAZDA CX-9 SPORT
7,552 MILES · STK:18HS952
SALE PRICE $24,995
KBB: $28,153
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$10K bail for man who allegedly strangled his wife

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $10,000 cash bail on a man who allegedly strangled his wife.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed the $10,000 cash bail on Jesus Borja Santos last Tuesday.

Assistant public defender Jean Nogues, who represented Santos, later asked the court to modify his bail and to release Santos to his grandmother as his third-party custodian. Superior Court Associate Judge Judge Kenneth L. Govendo granted Santos' request for bail modification.

Govendo imposed a curfew on Santos from 6pm to 6am.

Santos is charged with strangulation, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace and he is scheduled to return to court on Oct. 21 at 9am for a preliminary hearing, and on Oct. 27 at 9am for his arraignment.

According to court documents, the victim told police that Santos wanted to have sex but she refused and that they ended up on the ground, and that was when Santos used his left had to squeeze her neck. The victim said the squeeze was not too hard, but she had difficulty breathing. While he was allegedly choking her, Santos also reportedly slapped her face with his open right palm four times.

When the victim managed to get up, Santos grabbed her back to the ground and, this time, placed one of his palms over her nose and mouth, causing her to struggle for air.

She said she was about to black out when Santos let go and that was when she started vomiting.

She told police that she kept asking Santos to leave her alone, but he did not leave her until his mother came in the room.

Responding police reported that the victim had a dark bruise on the left side of her face and lip area. Police also said she had bruises on her left arm around her bicep area and a reddish mark on her neck.

Marianas-themed flight sells out in South Korea

A Marianas-theme flight departing from and returning to Incheon International Airport on Oct. 25, 2020, has sold out on its first day of sale in South Korea, emphasizing the market's renewed interest in travel.

In cooperation with Hana Tour, the Marianas Visitors Authority organized "The Luxury Hotel" on an Asiana Airlines A380 aircraft, which will immerse passengers in a Marianas-themed experience during the two-hour-and-20-minute flight.

"This sightseeing flight product is the first of its kind in Korea, and we are excited about the enthusiastic response of consumers in buying out the flight on the first say of sales," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "This flight taps into consumers' eagerness to travel and will create a sense of excitement tied to the Marianas. We have the opportunity to plant the seed for travel to the Marianas in the future by also sharing with them the positive Marianas response to COVID-19 and everything our beautiful islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota have to offer."

The flight's limited 160 seats were booked on a first-come, first-served basis on the Hana Tour website. The flight will emphasize the Marianas theme with in-flight meals, amenity kits, Asiana Airlines discount coupons, promotional information on the Marianas, and mileage points. ***(MVA)***

A. SAMOA

From Page 1

husband stranded.

"Every time I talk about it, I just cry," she said.

Va'a left the U.S. territory in the Pacific in February with her husband for medical treatment. They planned to fly home in March from San Francisco but decided to postpone after hearing a security worker at the airport had contracted the virus.

Since then, they haven't been able to leave because American Samoa Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga closed the territory on March 13 to protect those on the islands from COVID-19—and it hasn't reported any cases.

In July, after the order was extended, the Va'as stopped bothering to make travel plans and are awaiting word from government officials about when they can come home.

"The interests of the 60,000 residents on-island and protecting their lives outweighs the interest of the 600 or more residents stranded in the United States," said Iulogologo Joseph Pereira, chairman of the territorial government COVID-19 task force. "As the governor has continuously pointed out, more healthcare facilities are available in Hawaii and mainland states that they can access if they contract the virus."

Some people from American Samoa were stranded in the midst of family visits or business travel. A Facebook page started by Va'a and others to share information has turned into a support system for those who long to go back to American Samoa, said Kueni Aumoeualogo-Hisatake. She went to Honolulu with her husband for their bi-annual medical checkups on the last flight out of the territory on March 26—not anticipating they would not be able to return.

Aumoeualogo-Hisatake said the situation makes her "feel abandoned and neglected."

Other people can't leave American Samoa.

Epifania Rapozo lives in Washington state and returned to the territory in February for the first time in 20 years to visit her ailing grandfather, who later died. Unable to return to the U.S., Rapozo's 10-year-old daughter has been taking online classes and her 6-year-old son is enrolled in a local school.

"I am grateful that we are COVID-free but also quite disappointed on how the government is handling the issue," Rapozo said. "There is absolutely no excuse as to why there hasn't been any action implemented to repatriate not only us U.S. citizens but our own people."

Moliga is reviewing a petition by stranded residents demanding repatriation. But amid a spike in coronavirus cases in Hawaii, he has asked Hawaiian Airlines—the only carrier with regularly scheduled service between Honolulu and Pago Pago—to suspend flights through November.

The territory is controlling its ports by quarantining crew members on boats, and essential workers arriving from the U.S. are tested for the virus.

Officials did arrange a free charter flight in July to take 150 Medicaid patients and support staff to the United States for medical treatment. There were enough extra seats to accommodate 45 students heading to the U.S. for college and 79 people who had been stranded on the island since March.

The nonmedical passengers paid $884 for their one-way ticket, a price that prevented Rapozo from taking the flight. There were no passengers on the charter's return flight to Pago Pago.

"In the beginning, everybody was happy that our government closed the borders, you know, for safety," Aumoeualogo-Hisatake said. "But now, as time has accumulated, there's more understanding about the virus and the preventive measures and all that stuff and how to deal with it."

She and others say they don't want American Samoa to open its borders, just bring them home safely.

As they wait, the Va'as are living with relatives but fear they have overstayed their welcome and are making plans to move in with other family in Seattle.

They consider themselves lucky among the stranded. Makerita Iosefo Va'a is a manager at American Samoa's Medicaid office and her husband Shaun Va'a is a member of the territory's House of Representatives. While away, they're able to work remotely without losing income and they have rented a car so they can get out of their family's hair once in awhile.

"We have each other. We don't have children," she said. "There are people I know who have lost their jobs."

"It's nice here, but home is home," she added, pointing out that California, with its dry heat and isolation is much different than American Samoa. "Here, we don't really know people, versus back home you have a village. ... We have family here, but with COVID, you can't really go visit them."

Back home, not everyone wears a mask and social distancing is still catching on, especially in tight-knit Samoan cultures. Many people wonder what will happen when American Samoa opens its borders.

Water service outage on Capital Hill today

There will be an emergency scheduled water service interruption today, Oct. 15, 2020, from 8am to 12pm for customers in the following areas: Capital Hill 1200 Block, Isa Drive from the Retirement Building south toward the Kagman Road intersection to include Talafofo and Egigi Drive.

The emergency water service interruption is due two service lateral leaks located in the Marshall Loop area across the former Esco's Bakery. Water operators of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will be performing leak repairs in efforts to minimize non-revenue water loss. Water service to the affected areas will resume soon after.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, please proceed with caution and/or take alternative routes when traveling through the area.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

BAR

From Page 1

issue a press release with all the information you have requested," said Hodson in response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry about the evaluation.

Sending out the evaluation forms posed no problems, Hodson said. The challenge was in getting the evaluation forms back as all Bar Association general membership meetings have been held virtually since the advent of COVID-19. "Generally, the meetings would be held in person and members could just submit their forms at the meeting instead of having to return them in person to the Bar Association office," she said.

The association has counteracted this challenge, Hodson said, by offering to have the forms picked up by Bar Association executive director Peonie Cabrera from each agency or office, which makes the process easier and more convenient, as well as accepting all evaluations done by email or mail.

Traditionally, only a small percentage of active CNMI Bar members who are based in the Commonwealth take part in the evaluation of the performances of judges and justices.

As an associate justice in the Supreme Court, this will be the first time for Inos to undergo the retention election process. He was previously retained for another six-year term on the bench in 2012 when he was an associate judge in the Superior Court.

This election will be Naraja's third retention election. In 2007 and 2014, voters backed Naraja's retention on the bench.

For Govendo, this election is also his third retention. In 2007 and 2014, voters overwhelmingly voted for his retention.

Under a constitutional amendment, the question of whether justices or judges will be retained shall be put to a vote at a general election immediately before the end of that justice's or judge's initial term of office.

In 2003, Juan T. Lizama was the first judge in the CNMI to be retained on the bench. Voters rejected the retention of Timothy H. Bellas and Virginia S. Onerheim.

CCC

From Page 1

operations on Saipan until such time that the regulatory fee is fully paid.

He also asked CCC to order IPI to pay a $50,000 fine per violation per day that the regulatory fee went unpaid for the major violations in the three claims.

According to Ernest in Yeom's complaint, IPI is required by Commonwealth law, the casino license agreement, and the regulations promulgated by CCC to pay a regulatory fee of $3.1 million each year. Per Commonwealth law, that regulatory fee is due on or before Oct. 1 of every year.

Ernest said that IPI has paid this fee each year that it has been required prior to 2020. Per Commonwealth law, the fee for the year beginning Oct. 1, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2021, was due on or before Oct. 1, which IPI failed to do in whole on or before the deadline, Ernest said.

He said that IPI has a statutory and contractual obligations to pay the regulatory fee on the due date.

In August 2019, then-CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero filed a complaint against IPI for the untimely payment of the casino license fee. Ernest said the parties entered into a stipulated resolution of that enforcement action. In that stipulated resolution, Ernest said, IPI agreed that it would "ensure that all required fee payments are timely made as required by applicable Commonwealth law, regulation, or otherwise."

He said IPI has materially breached the terms of the stipulated agreement and the casino license agreement by failing to make the required payment in full of the casino regulatory fee.

He said the failure to timely pay the amount required by the Commonwealth Code for more than 12 hours is a major violation of the commission's regulations and should be penalized as a major violation.

"Each day the fee went unpaid is a separate violation," Ernest said.

Last August, Yeom also filed a complaint against IPI before the CCC over its failure to pay the $15.5 million casino license fee by the deadline last Aug. 12. Yeom, through Ernest, filed the same four claims against IPI.

Last June, then CCC executive director Charlie Atalig, through Ernest, filed a complaint before CCC against IPI for allegedly failing to contribute $40 million in community benefit fund money in 2018 and 2019, as required by the casino license agreement.

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REFRIED BEANS
15 OZ
GET 2X BONUS POINTS ITEM

SALE PRICE $11.99
EMBERS CHARCOAL
GET 2X BONUS POINTS ITEM

SALE PRICE $6.99
GET 2X BONUS POINTS ITEM
HORMEL
14 OZ SNACK TRAYS
ASSORTED VARIETIES

SALE PRICE $12.98
GET 2X BONUS POINTS ITEM
CHICKEN LEG
QUARTERS 22 LB CASE

SALE PRICE $3.79
CHUNG'S
EGG ROLLS
ASSORTED FLAVORS
GET 2X BONUS POINTS ITEM

NOT YET A MEMBER?
SIGN UP!
IT'S FREE
**SOME RESTRICTION APPLY, SEE STORES FOR DETAILS!

Customers First! Rewards Plus! Payless SuperFresh & Truckload Store
SHOP » $1= 3 POINTS EARNED » REDEEM FOR ANY ITEM IN STORE!

Pacific Rim, KZMI offer a 'Christmas Surprise on Saipan'

Construction company Pacific Rim International is collaborating with Saipan radio station 103.9 FM KZMI to help a family celebrate Christmas in the best possible way through their "Christmas Surprise on Saipan"—as a way to support families that are going through challenging times in the wake of the double-whammy of Super Typhoon Yutu and the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Pacific Rim International president Keith J. Stewart, the goal of this event is to provide a memorable Christmas to a family that has been experiencing tough times. "Saipan's economy and the many lives of people have been devastated by COVID-19 and by Super Typhoon Yutu. This program aims to give them joy and support to overcome the challenges they may be experiencing, at least for the holidays," he said.

As part of this initiative, one family will be chosen based on an essay written about them by someone or another family that will nominate them. The theme of the essay will depend on why the nominator believes that this family is the most deserving. "[The nominator has to explain in the essay,] like, what happened that put the family in this position? Did they lose their house? Did they put all their money toward saving their child who had cancer? We won't know but I bet there will be a family that needs help," Stewart said.

The chosen family who wins "Christmas Surprise on Saipan" will have their house filled with Christmas decorations or other surprises that will depend on what the family needs. "For example, if we find the most deserving family is living in a tent, then we may rent a house for a year and decorate the house, leave presents, etc. If the family lost their car or needs transportation, maybe they get a new car or, if they need to send their kids to college, maybe we can help with this."

The surprise could include—but is not limited nor guaranteed to include—decorations, gifts, equipment, cash, food, sponsorships, and/or a wide variety of other items, based upon the perceived need of the family. "We will determine the final surprise when we read the essay and make the selection as the intent is to help put the family in a better position, so 2021 can basically be a better start," he added.

Starting today, nominators can fill up an application form that is available at the Pacific Rim and KZMI's websites and Facebook pages. The consent of the family being nominated is needed. Anyone can nominate a family who lives on Saipan, which means there are no restrictions on nationality, ethnicity, sex, family size, etc., and it is important that the nominated family will be on island on the week of Christmas. The deadline to submit applications is Nov. 30.

There will be an executive committee that will be composed of key program sponsors and they may conduct a reasonable background check on the family being considered. Then a selection committee will be responsible for identifying the winning family. "The first goal is to help one family but, if there is excess capacity, we would consider helping others," Stewart said.

"When a winner is selected, our committee will confidentially reach out to the nominator and coordinate a time when the nominated family will not be home. While the family is away, the decorating/prep team will go to the house and set up the Christmas surprise. …The more detailed and complete the application is, the better the team will be able to meet the family's needs," Stewart added.

Stewart and his team are looking at making this program an annual event. "We hope that we can do this every year and get the community to participate and experience this whole process together and hopefully change lives and we hope many will support this with us," he said.

"…This isn't a stunt or anything as we truly want to find a family that we can have a great positive impact this Christmas. We believe it will have a great positive impact and will be a lot of fun for everyone who participates," he added.

For more information, go to Pacific Rim and 103.9 FM KZMI websites and Facebook pages. ***(Bea Cabrera)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

Public Notice

From the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM of the CNMI'S DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DATE: October 15, 2020

NOTICE: The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is currently reviewing a federal consistency determination from the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding the proposed reissuance of 52 Nationwide Permits (NWPs) and the issuance of five new NWPs. More information about the proposed activity can be accessed via the DCRM website at:
https://dcrm.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/crm/Nationwide-Permit-Reissuance-Agency-Letter-CZMA_CNMI.pdf &
https://dcrm.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/crm/2020-PN-NWP-initial.pdf

Federal consistency is a provision of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) that requires federal actions that affect the coastal zone to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of a coastal state's federally approved coastal management plan.

Comments on whether the project is consistent with the enforceable policies of the CNMI's coastal management program can be submitted to the Division of Coastal Resources Management at fedcon@dcrm.gov.mp.

This public notice has been published for compliance with 15 CFR § 930.42. DCRM is soliciting public comments for thirty (30) days, starting on October 15, 2020 and ending on November 14, 2020. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your consideration.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW/SWMD21-ITB-001

SUBMISSION DATE: November 12, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M

"Procurement of Services for the Removal, Packaging, Containment, and Shipping of Hazardous E-Waste Materials Collected at the Transfer Station Lower Base, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars ($50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the **Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station**, Saipan required for each set.

There will be a **Mandatory Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **October 27, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Solid Waste Management Division Conference Room, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **November 6, 2020** to **Mr. Blas T. Mafnas, Acting Director of Solid Waste Management Division**, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ PETER P. CAMACHO
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

USPS says that some USCIS filings had been damaged

The U.S. Postal Service has advised U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that a small number of filings of Form 1-129CWR, Semiannual Report for CW-1 Employers, mailed on Saipan on Sept. 10 or 11, 2020, were damaged in transit to USCIS.

»Certain CNM1 employers should confirm that USCIS received their Form I-129CWR

If you mailed your Form I-129CWR on or about those dates, check USCIS Case Status Online to confirm that the agency received your form. Use the underlying Form 1-229CW petition receipt number when you check Case Status Online.

If Case Status Online indicates that USCIS received your form, you do not need to do anything further. However, if USCIS still has not received your form, refile your Form I-129CWR. USCIS will accept Form 1-129CWRs that are refiled late as a result of this damage.

For questions regarding the delivery of your Form I-129CWR, contact USPS Customer Service or call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-877). ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Max Investments LLC

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Max Investments LLC is proposing to operate a Cannabis Farm establishment. This use is classified as "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 502 NEW-3-5 in Dandan village. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: October 16, 2020
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Commonwealth Zoning Board Office
2nd Floor Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, October 15, 2020. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@zoning.gov.mp. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

Friday, October 16, 2020 I 5:00 PM
Commonwealth Zoning Office
2nd Floor Joeten Dandan Building
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.zoning.gov.mp

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda

B. Public Hearings
1. **Conditional Use Application #2020-2595** – Max Investments proposes to utilize cargo storage containers for Cannabis Farm use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This project is located in Lot No. 502 NEW-3-5 in the village of Dandan. This area is zoned as Rural.

C. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link: https://zoom.us/j/6853007492?pwd=Q0daYlNPMDdXdFlQRTQ4UkhFRjViUT09
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492
Password: Oct16

Executive orders vs COVID-19 renewed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres renewed Tuesday Executive Order 2020-04, as amended, declaring a State of Public Health Emergency and State of Significant Emergency for the entire CNMI due to threat posed by COVID-19.

Torres also renewed Executive Order 2020-07, which ordered the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office, through the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force, and in partnership with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., to undertake necessary COVID-19 containment measures by means of developing emergency directives to protect the health and safety of the public.

Torres first issued Executive Order 2020-04 last March 16, declaring a State of Public Health Emergency and a continued Declaration of a State of Significant Emergency, establishing response, quarantine, and preventive measures concerning COVID-19.

He first issued Executive Order 2020-07 last April 16.

Torres said executive orders 2020-04 and 07 will take effect immediately and remain in effect for 30 days from Tuesday.

Since the first instance when a person was confirmed positive for COVID-19 infection last March 28, a total of 77 individuals have so far been confirmed positive and, of those individuals, two have died.

NAVFAC Marianas names 2 as Engineers of the Year

ASAN, Guam—Lt. Mark Bush and Lee Enzastiga were named yesterday as the Naval Facilities Engineering Command's Engineers of the Year for fiscal year 2021, with Bush and Enzastiga representing NAVFAC Marianas military and civilian engineers, respectively.

"The hard work and dedication of these individuals speaks volumes of the quality of our team here at the command," said NAVFAC commanding officer Capt. Tim Liberatore. "I am extremely proud of Lt. Bush and Lee for achieving this important recognition, and would like to pass on my personal congratulations for a job well done to both individuals on their accomplishments."

Bush is a construction management engineer for Andersen Facilities, Environment, Acquisitions Division and manages three military construction projects valued at nearly $225 million, including two critical Air Force Asia Pacific stability initiative hangars.

He began leading these first-of-their-kind, hardened hangars in summer 2019 and has since guided the construction team to accrue nearly $70 million of work-in-place in just over 12 months. Additionally, in a three-month period, he drove negotiations to resolve a time-critical modification to ensure fire suppression and underground utilities systems supporting these hangars and several others, preventing $1 million of redesign and at least six months of potential project delays.

More impressively, Bush reversed the course of a difficult project to build a mission critical corrosion control facility that was challenged with encroachment from other large projects and airfield activities.

He championed efforts to steer the contractor from a near work stoppage and possible contract termination discussions, to placing the project on path toward a successful completion. His efforts led to the project's work-in-place nearly doubling and the contractor tripling their onsite workforce.

Bush displayed superb leadership and boundless energy, reinforcing the long-standing positive image of military engineers enabling joint forces in the Pacific. "I did not get to this stage of my career alone," said Bush. "I have had many military and civilian mentors throughout my time in the Civil Engineer Corps and this is an affirmation of their investment in me. I want to give special thanks to Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan McGuire and Terry Walker, my FEAD director and supervisory general engineer, for being my sounding board, entertaining my wild ideas, and having my back when it mattered most."

Enzastiga serves as the NAVFAC Marianas Capital Improvements Business and Program Management head. He supervises CI program/project managers and program analysts, manages all construction contract programs including MILCONs, and oversees budget and resourcing for the CI department.

He has personally overseen the project management, design development and construction contract award of more than 80 engineering design and construction contracts valued at approximately $250 million, in addition to his supervisory and management responsibilities.

Aside from expertly executing his day-to-day duties, he has successfully led several process improvement objectives and implemented the use of key performance indicator metrics, resulting in increased department efficiency and improved quality of delivered products and services.

"I know there are many other engineers at NAVFAC Marianas who are just as qualified and who do great work here, so it is an honor to be selected as the NAVFAC Marianas Civilian Engineer of the Year," said Enzastiga. "I owe my recognition to the NAVFAC Marianas team who I work with on a daily basis. Almost without exception, when I need information to do my job and be successful, they are quick to respond."

Enzastiga's leadership at the command is pivotal in facilitating and ensuring the timely execution of design and construction contracts across the area of operations in support of the warfighter. ***(PR)***

ROAD CLEARING
Seabees deployed as the expeditionary construction and engineering capability of Task Force 75 conduct hauling operations to ensure the job site is clear of debris in support of Marpo Heights Road G construction on Tinian. The Marpo Heights road improvement project is a U.S. Department of Defense innovative readiness training mission.
U.S. NAVY/MCS2 COLE C. PIELOP

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

RFQ21-GOV-003
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Public Assistance (PA) Office, (collectively, "Commonwealth") are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified contractors for the Supply of Materials, Labor & Equipment for the Repairs/Renovation and/or New Construction of Public Facilities as a result of Typhoon Mangkut and Yutu (FEMA DR-4396-MP and FEMA DR-4404-MP) for the islands of Saipan and Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, currently in effect, and with the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC) §70-30-3-725 Gratuities and Kickbacks and §70.30.3-730 Prohibition Against Contingent Fees. Public Law 15-95 Local Preference Act, as amended by Public Law 15-118 does not apply to this federally funded project. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the CNMI.

The project package and scope of work will be available on Thursday, October 15, 2020 at the Governor's Public Assistance Office, MH I Building Marina Heights Business Park, Saipan.
A MANDATORY Pre-Proposal meeting is scheduled on Thursday, November 5, 2020, at 10:00am at the Governor's Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP. Questions regarding the Request for Proposals must be submitted in writing to Mr. Patrick Guerrero, Public Assistance Officer, facsimile to (670) 664-2417 or email pguerrero@pa.gov.mp no later than 4 p.m., ChST, November 6, 2020.

The total proposal length shall not exceed 15 pages in length. Note, a firm that submits a proposal as a prime contractor cannot submit as a subcontractor on another proposal. However, as a subcontractor, a company may be included in multiple proposals by different contractors. Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications & Experience in Construction including Firm's Profile	30%
2. Work load and resources to accomplish work	30%
3. Past performance with the CNMI Government on similar projects	15%
4. Project and/or Management Approach	15%
5. Visual examples of previous works	10%

Performance time for completion of the Repair/Renovation and/or New Construction will be dependent on the type of project. Liquidated damages will be assessed and shall be the greater of (i) Two Hundred Dollars (US$200.00), or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by the number of calendar days of the contract time, the contract time and contract price being determined at the time of the assessment of liquidated damages for each and every day beyond the established completion date.

Discussions shall be conducted with the top Five (5) ranked firms. The Public Assistance Office may elect to retain all of the top 5 firms. The successful proposers will be subjected to a responsibility and responsiveness determination in compliance with Section 70-30.3-245 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Depending on the number of projects, the PA Office will request each firm to submit a price quotation for these projects, and selection will be based on the lowest cost.

Proposals must be sealed and marked **RFQ21-GOV-003, Construction Services** For proposers within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of the proposals must be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan no later than 10:00 a.m. ChST, November 16, 2020. Proposers located outside the CNMI shall obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of intent form that is provided in this RFQ. Notices of intent to propose must be received by the Director of Procurement Services no later than 10:00 a.m., ChST, November 16, 2020 and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp. Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent Form will be cause for rejection of proposal (This only applies for proposers located outside of the CNMI). For proposers located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of the sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than, November 16, 2020, and must be received by the Director of Procurement Services no later than November 25, 2020. Failure to submit the required number of copies of the proposal may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfection in any proposal if, in its opinion to do so would be in the best interests of the CNMI government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

Virginia C. Villagomez
Governor's Authorized Representative

Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS FOR AN EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM FUNDED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-COVID FUNDS BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was allocated the third round of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)- COVID funds. The intended use of the funds is to provide food assistance to eligible CNMI residents who have been financially impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is requesting for grant proposals from non-profit organizations to supplement and expand ongoing efforts to procure food, ***specifically to distribute food vouchers.*** Proposals will be due to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, Garapan, Saipan, and in the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, no later than 4:30 pm, Wednesday, October 28, 2020. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at 670-234-6866 or by email at deputydirector@nmhcgov.net.

Minimum Application Requirements

1) 501(c)(3) designated organizations classified as a public charity with a minimum of two (2) year operating history as a non-profit
2) Articles of Incorporation
3) By-Laws
4) Non-Profit Annual Corporation Report
5) Business License and Tax ID Number
6) Current listing of Active Board of Directors (within the last 12 months)
7) Current listing of active employees
8) A statement of financial position (balance sheet) and a statement of financial activity for the prior year end, to be submitted with the application
9) Proof of Workmen's Compensation
10) Submission of a list of any other grant money received and balance to date

Application Information

In addition to the requirements above, a grant application is required. The Grant application is available on NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net. Please click the CDBG tab to access the application. **The application submission deadline is Wednesday, October 28, 2020, no later than 4:30 p.m.**

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Stay safe in winter

The warm summer months have given us a slight advantage in the fight to slow the spread of COVID-19. Being able to dine outdoors, visit at a distance outdoors and enjoy time in parks and wilderness all have let us use open spaces and fresh air to thwart transmission of the virus. But now colder weather is on the horizon and we're headed back indoors where our risk goes up.

The good news is that after seven months of learning about how the coronavirus spreads, we now know more about how to make indoor spaces safer. And that means now is the time to take the steps we can to improve indoor air quality and do what we can to keep the virus in check.

Public health officials have been concerned that fall weather and return to indoor environments will cause a spike in COVID-19 infections because people cannot spread out as much indoors and because air doesn't circulate inside the way it does outdoors, meaning it is much easier to inhale the infected respiratory droplets that spread the virus.

But heating, ventilation and air conditioning specialists have advice for all of us about how to make our indoor environments safer.

We need to make sure the HVAC systems in our homes, offices and other indoor spaces are clean and functioning efficiently. We need to make sure the air filtration in our system is effectively removing particles from the indoor air. And we need to do what we can to encourage more air flow through indoor spaces so that fresh outdoor air replaces indoor air regularly.

This is important in our homes, but it is most crucial in buildings such as workplaces, schools and other public buildings where strangers will meet and where large groups of people may come into contact with one another.

Businesses and authorities responsible for public buildings should consult with licensed HVAC technicians to make sure their HVAC systems are functioning adequately to prevent the spread of coronavirus as much as possible.

And state and federal authorities should look for opportunities to use grant money or other funding to help business owners and local governments afford this critical public health work.

We have time now to prepare for the cold weather months, and we have the knowledge about how coronavirus spreads that we need to make improvements that can help prevent contagion. Now is the time to do the work that can slow the virus and save lives.

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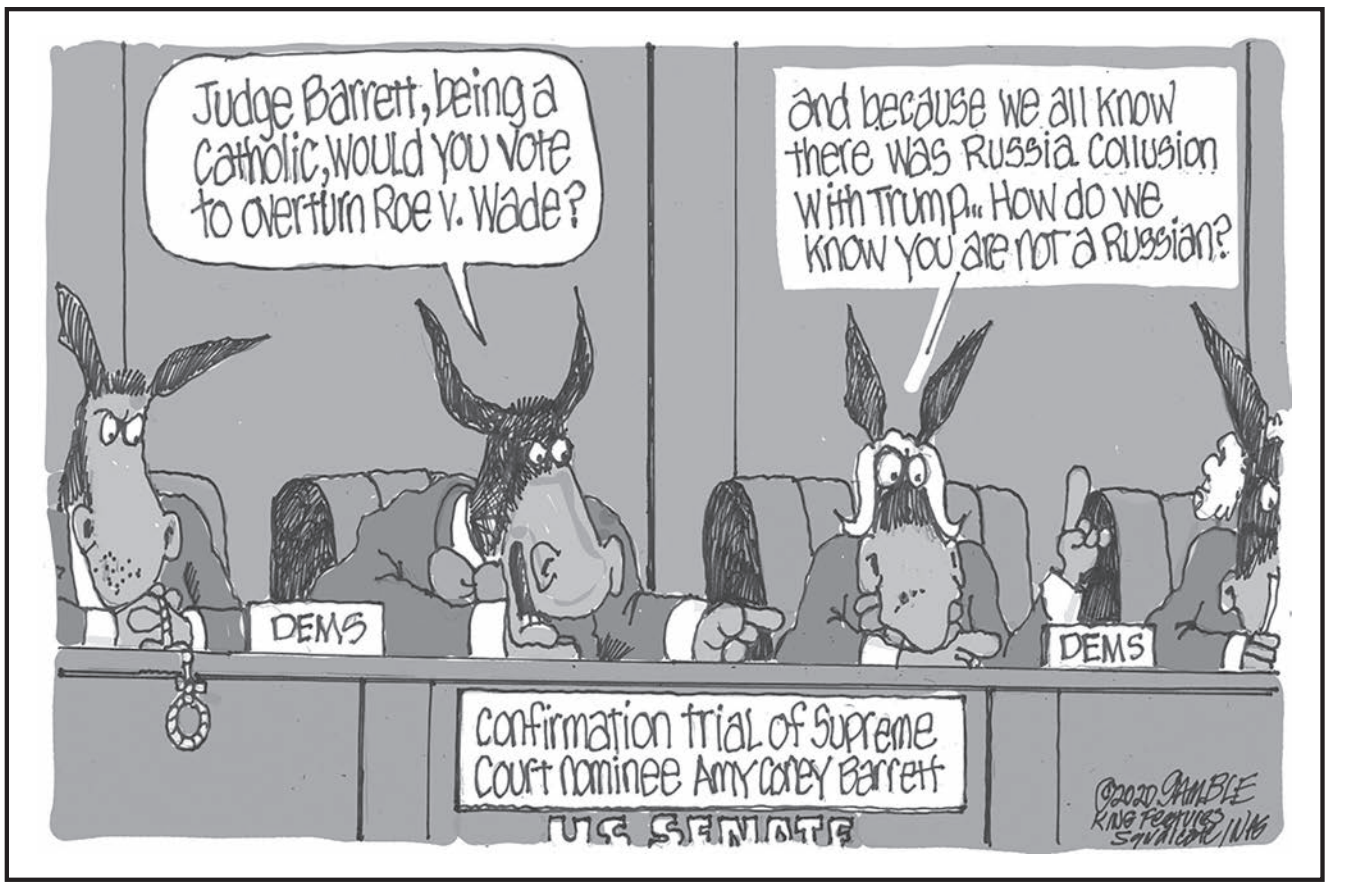
Judge Barrett, being a Catholic, would you vote to overturn Roe v. Wade?
and because we all know there was Russia collusion with Trump... How do we know you are not a Russian?
DEMS
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confirmation trial of Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett
JUDGE SENATE
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'This fight will be won or lost by individual decisions'

Editor's Note: The following is a transcript of Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero's special address to the public that she delivered yesterday, Oct. 14, 2020.

By LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero is the governor of Guam.

For seven months, we have confronted the largest public health crisis in the world.

The facts are clear: Dozens of our neighbors have been lost to COVID-19. Fifty-five of these deaths occurred in the last three months alone.

Since August, we have seen more than 2,500 cases of new infection; and our public hospital is seeing more COVID-19 patients than it ever has before.

Though no one knew a great deal about COVID-19 at the start of this pandemic, our mission was to save as many lives as possible and prevent a time when the number of people infected grew so large so quickly [that] we no longer had enough doctors, nurses, and ventilators to treat them.

Our enemy is faceless and bipartisan.

It doesn't care about our age, race, or religion—it preys on the vulnerable but it is more than capable of taking the strong.

Despite these facts, your choices—your willingness to live under restrictions, social distance, and wear masks stood down COVID-19 before.

But, as we modified quarantine requirements and began to reopen our economy, the embers of this pandemic sparked a second flame we are now struggling to control.

Under our first Stay-At-Home order, the movement of residents islandwide dropped 75% and the number of new [COVID-19] infections plummeted along with it.

The second Stay-At-Home order has been less effective—limiting islandwide movement to just 25% compared to baseline.

This time, numbers continue to rise and the demands placed on this community are profound. Thousands of families worry about the jobs they've lost or the businesses they've closed. They worry about the impact this virus will have on their futures and the futures of their children. These fears are justified.

We all have had enough, and each of us—every single one of us—wants to go back to our lives before this pandemic started.

To get there, we have to know what steps our government is taking to win and what we can do to help.

Daily testing has increased from an average of 27-a-day in March to nearly 500-a-day in October—a per capita testing rate that, according to Johns Hopkins University, is greater than the State of Hawaii's.

We have partnered with private clinics and diagnostic labs to deliver results faster and provided them with the equipment and reagents to meet this demand.

To date, we've conducted over 55,000 tests—roughly about a third of our population. And, we've turned a small, specialized unit of six contact tracers in March to 46 right now.

Knowing that even more contact tracing help is needed, a partnership with the University of Guam and the University of California, San Francisco allowed us to train nearly 100 more personnel to join the contact tracing fight.

And, despite a worldwide shortage of medical personnel and nurses, our COVID-19 bed capacity is 122, we have 61 negative pressure beds and we can expand capacity if the need arises.

But winning the war on COVID-19 requires that we fight the battle at its source. Data tells us that multi-generational homes, especially in the north, are most vulnerable to infection. For this reason, Public Health is executing enhanced community testing—prioritizing communities and regions that have the highest frequency of positive cases.

Additionally, we are working with the mayors and leaders of these communities—with their elders and churches to help keep themselves and their families safe from COVID-19.

The steps taken have increased bed capacity, increased testing, expanded contact tracing exponentially, and touched our most vulnerable where they live.

Every resource we have is working to contain COVID-19—to slow and stop its deadly spread—but you are the solution: your choices; your commitment; and your tireless vigilance are the only way this will end.

We can wear our masks, socially distance, and stay safer at home, or we can remain where we are now—sick, and frustrated, too far apart from our family and friends.

Government can do many things, but the fight against COVID-19 will be won or lost by the decisions we make as individuals.

Guam has stood down the darkness in this world before, and we will do so again.

We do this not for ourselves or our politics—but for our children—and the hope that what we sacrifice today will win them a safer, healthier, better Guam tomorrow.

For a video of the special address, go to YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QjM9T3sWqk&pbjreload=101

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How hatred became all the rage in our politics

By CLARENCE PAGE
Chicago Tribune

Clarence Page is a member of the Chicago Tribune *Editorial Board. Readers may send him email at cpage@tribune.com.*

Are we Americans hating more now but enjoying it less? Let me count the ways:

A self-styled "militia" group is charged by the FBI with an alleged plot to kidnap Michigan's Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and make her stand "trial" for forcing residents to wear masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many Democrats are arguing seriously with one another and with former Vice President Joe Biden as to whether the Supreme Court should be expanded to dodge the decisions of an expected conservative majority.

And President Donald Trump, recovering from his own bout with the coronavirus, unleashed a 24-hour Twitter storm last week in which he demanded to know, in all caps, why Biden, former President Barack Obama and "CROOKED HILLARY" Clinton have not yet been arrested for a "coup" that he apparently thinks is too awful to require actual evidence.

Yes, I know we Americans have had our times of severe national divisions. We had a Civil War. And I remember the 1960s.

But today's partisan divide is putting a strain on our national fabric like the first—and perhaps only—Trump-Biden debate-turned-debacle put a strain on our national eardrums.

How, we need to ask ourselves, did we get here? How did haters become all the rage in politics? Can we turn down the heat?

"Negative partisanship" is what political scientists call support for a party that is based not so much on loyalty to that party as on how much we can't stand the other party. Of course, there always has been some of this contentiousness in politics. But the divide has grown so much in recent years that, as Charlie Cook at the Cook Political Report wrote last year, "The old saying that 'I vote the person not the party,' once a commonplace belief, is now just a cliche."

You can blame, as many do, an excess of power in the presidency, in Senate rules or in strong judicial review.

Forty years ago, when asked to rate how "favorable and warm" their opinion of each party was, the average Democrat and Republican said they felt OK-ish about the opposite party. But for four decades now, partisans have increasingly turned against each other in an escalating cycle of dislike and distrust—views of the other party are currently at an all-time low.

These days, even the wearing—or not wearing—of a mask to reduce the spread of COVID-19 can be viewed as a political act, another sign of what political scientists call "conflict extension." That's what happens when the partisan divide becomes so great that, when it comes to romance, single people won't even date supporters of the opposite party.

Just about everyone I know can't wait for the 2020 election campaign season to end. But, as we've seen in the past, the partisan sides are so entrenched by now—with activists, social media and other factors offering aid and comfort—that the tension is not likely to end that soon.

In the end, the future is up to us, the voters. The first step is to be aware of how deeply we have waded into the pool of partisanship and try to help one another find a safe and sane way back to more civil discourse.

Perhaps we have become too accustomed in today's world to news-as-entertainment, politics-as-sport and serious issues treated like points on a score card. Our political system is hardly perfect, but it's the best we've got. Changes need to come with careful deliberation, not just political reflexes.

That's a big challenge, but it's going to stay with us regardless of which side wins this coming election.

In some ways, this challenge reminds me of a troubled marriage. After occupying the same political house for a long time, couples sometimes take each other for granted. Flames of conflict can be fanned by others who may not always have our best interests in mind. At some point, we need to reintroduce ourselves to each other before we have to break up the house—or before somebody else breaks it up for us.

No, the Democrats won't pack the court

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

For many progressive opinion-makers, the only way to save the Supreme Court is to destroy it.

They believe the best response to the Republican-held Senate confirming a Trump nominee to fill Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat on the Supreme Court is to pack the Court if Democrats win in November. Holding out the court-packing threat, they argue, also might give Republicans second thoughts about filling the vacancy.

For the Democrats, court-packing would be a murder-suicide. It would end the Supreme Court as we know it, and almost certainly bring a swift and decisive end to Democratic congressional majorities. There's a reason Republicans aren't taking the threat seriously in their calculations.

No matter how infuriated a party is, the rules of political gravity still apply. A president is at the high point of his power at the outset, steadily losing juice over time.

Would Biden spend precious capital on court-packing early in his presidency? If so, voting, green energy and health care legislation would take a back seat.

If, instead, all of that legislation went first, then court-packing would be pushed toward the back of the line, when Biden would have diminished clout for the political fight of a lifetime.

The question of timing would enter in another way. If Democrats managed to add Court seats in the second year of a Biden presidency, how much time and political capital would they have left to fill them before the midterms? If Republicans took back the Senate, they certainly wouldn't fill them.

And, of course, when Republicans hold the presidency and Congress again, they'd add their own seats or subtract the Democratic ones, making the entire exercise a nullity.

It's also true that, as a general rule, big changes happen in our system when a party makes a sustained public case for them prior to an election. Very few elected Democrats are willing to come out in favor of packing the court, and Biden the other day pointedly refused to endorse it.

Making court-packing the major initiative of his presidency would be an awkward fit for Biden. It would validate the critique of him as weak and prone to getting pushed around by the left. It would blow up his hope to bring some normality back to Washington. It would inexorably make the destruction of the legitimacy of the Supreme Court part of his legacy, when he imagines himself an institutionalist.

The argument that Republicans have already "packed the court" is a false equivalence. Yes, Republicans have used hardball tactics to keep open, or now to try to fill, vacancies. But these seats opened up in the natural course of events. They weren't conjured out of nowhere in a fit of pique or vengeance.

It easy to pound the table and demand an incredibly momentous change to our system when you don't have power and don't have to cope with the consequences. It's another to act in the face of vigorous opposition and with nervous officeholders in marginal districts or states looking for a way out.

No matter how much progressives want elected Democrats to write the ransom note, they aren't going to take the Supreme Court captive next year, let alone kill the hostage.

In plot against Whitmer, 'militia' has become a loaded word

By PETER BHATIA
Detroit Free Press

Peter Bhatia is the editor of the Free Press. *Contact him at pbhatia@gannett.com.*

Militias are in the news after last week's events in Michigan. Members of the "Wolverine Watchmen" were among those arrested in the plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Merriam-Webster lists this as its third definition of militia: a private group of armed individuals that operates as a paramilitary force and is typically motivated by a political or religious ideology (specifically: such a group that aims to defend individual rights against government authority that is perceived as oppressive).

Discussion of militias inevitably gets caught up in the never-ending debate about the Second Amendment to the Constitution, which states: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

But my purpose here is not to discuss gun rights, but rather the word militia.

Arguably the framers of the Constitution didn't anticipate the military of today. And it is easy to see how gun rights and militias get intertwined.

But the use of "militia" to describe the men accused Thursday in an alleged plot against Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer seems out of date.

Militias, according to all the reporting I have read over the last several years, come in various sizes and shapes. Some are just guys roaming around the woods shooting their rifles. All have a distrust of government and authority, and a few pursue that distrust to violent extremes.

The Southern Poverty Law Center last year identified 576 "extreme antigovernment groups" in the country, including 181 self-styled militias, several of them in Michigan.

Late last week, our USA TODAY Network standards editor, Michael McCarter sent out this guidance:

"Avoid the terms militia or guard to describe an armed group of people. They may be using the term to convey authority they do not have.

"Be specific, and use phrases to describe who they are: armed men, armed men and women, etc. If the terms appear in the name of a group, they may be used in the name with a description of the group. If militia or guard appears in a quote, it may be used in the quote."

It's interesting that the FBI used the word "militia" in documents supporting the arrest of the plotters. I don't think any of us should underestimate the threat some of these groups represent to our democracy.

But McCarter is right, and we will avoid the term "militias" going forward.

The men taken into custody this week are innocent until proven guilty. But the crimes they stand accused of are acts of terror, not military valor. We should not be confused just because the alleged perpetrators claim to be motivated by patriotism, anti-fascism, or any other ideology.

Late last week, Gov. Whitmer weighed in with her own tweet: "They are not 'militias.' They're domestic terrorists endangering and intimidating their fellow Americans. Words matter."

Journalists are passionate about the First Amendment and the protections therein. We will defend the right of Americans to say what they think about the issues of the day. That is certainly being thoroughly exercised in the current political atmosphere.

But advocacy of violence crosses the line. That runs counter to everything American democracy is about.

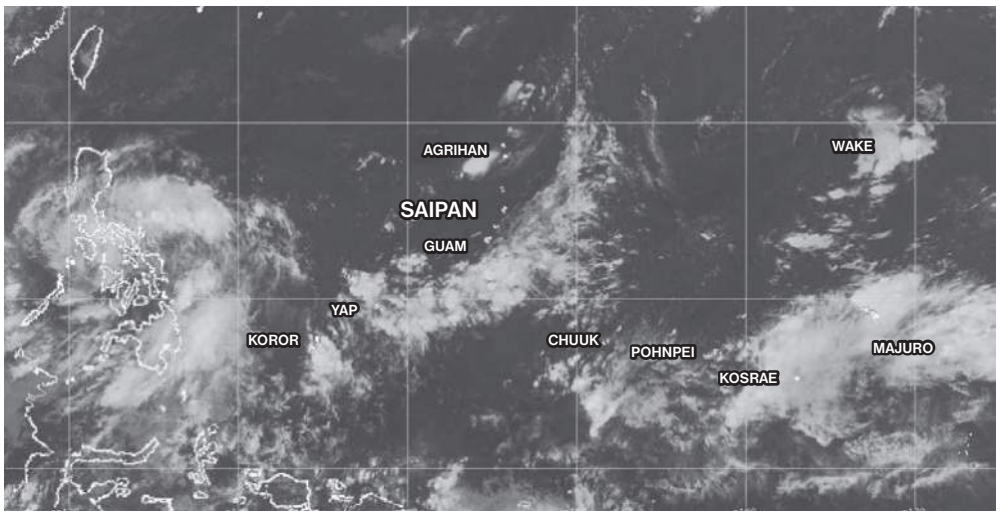
The plot described in the FBI affidavit is a blueprint for terror. And we will describe those accused of conspiring to kidnap the governor as what they are: suspected domestic terrorists.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:40 AM, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show isolated showers near the islands with additional showers and thunderstorms east of the Marianas, oriented along a SW-NE line, slowly working its way westward. Surface and upper-level analyses suggest this disturbance is the result of the interaction of a weak surface trough and a narrow jet of 30-40 kt winds aloft associated with an upper low over the far northern islands. Buoys show seas between 4 and 5 ft.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	63° / 54°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	72° / 46°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	87° / 76°
London	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 54°
Los Angeles	Sunny	75° / 59°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Showers	70° / 50°
Miami	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
New York	Sunny	80° / 62°
Osaka	Cloudy	70° / 64°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	64° / 50°
Busan	Cloudy	68° / 63°
Rome	Sunny	79° / 55°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	84° / 61°
San Francisco	Sunny	70° / 52°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 57°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	66° / 57°
Washington, DC	Sunny	81° / 59°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:08 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	6:08 AM	5:56 PM
Saturday	6:08 AM	5:55 PM
Sunday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM
Monday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	4:15 AM	4:54 PM	-
Friday	5:16 AM	5:40 PM	-
Saturday	6:17 AM	6:26 PM	-
Sunday	7:19 AM	7:15 PM	-
Monday	8:22 AM	8:07 PM	-

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:14 AM	HIGH TIDE	0.65
5:48 AM	LOW TIDE	1.83
12:18 PM	HIGH TIDE	0.09
6:41 PM	LOW TIDE	2.02

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:30am	8:10am	1, 4
UA117	7:50am	8:30am	6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:30am	9:10pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1 via Guam
UA183	9:05pm	10:50pm	5 via Guam

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:50am	6:31am	1, 4
UA174	6:15am	6:56am	6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	11:45pm	6:56am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25pm	4:25am+1	1 via Guam
UA184	11:45pm	5:33am+1	5 via Guam

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Hyatt's Teppanyaki welcomes private parties

PHOTOS BY BEA CABRERA

Hyatt executive sous chef Zen Tomokane is hands on in supervising and preparating of food for its garnishing and seasoning to achieve the perfect taste at Hyatt Regency Saipan Teppanyaki.

"We love having our guests experience luxury but without breaking their wallets" said chef Zen Tomokane.

Teppanyaki of Hyatt Regency Saipan opened its doors last week for a private get-togethers after pausing its services for five months due to COVID-19 concerns. Although not yet in regular operations, Teppanyaki is now accepting small and private get-togethers where you can have the restaurant to yourselves, enjoy the food, the hospitality of staff, and the great ambiance with family or friends.

Hyatt executive sous chef Zen Tomokane together with his staff were excited to open and serve the magic of Teppanyaki once again. "The team worked together for days to make this first private get together happen. The restaurant and equipment were locked up for five months but we cleaned it up, refurbished all the wood, and cleaned the grill," he said.

"We were excited to compose the menu for this dinner party and definitely, for the many parties to come. For us, this is a great way to invite the community back to Hyatt, celebrate special occasions with us and enjoy the services we love to offer ," he added.

For more information about private parties at Teppanyaki, Miyako, and Giovanni's, call (670) 234-1234, look them up on Facebook: Hyatt Regency Saipan, and on their website http://saipan.regency.hyatt.com.

For the dinner party last week, Tomokane meticulously prepared a menu list that the guests do not enjoy on a regular basis or a dish that they have not had for many months due to the pandemic—no other restaurant serves them. "We prepared Hyatt specialties such as sashimi trio, king crab salad, escargot, scallops, and for the main entrée we served lobster tail and prime angus T-bone steak and the staples such as garlic fried rice, miso soup with pickles. Of course we always end the menu with a special dessert," he said.

"Our vendors were in a state of uncertainty… and whatever savings they give to us for the ingredients and products we get from them, we also extend these savings to our guests who comes through our doors…. We are mindful to make our guests experience luxury without really hurting their wallet," he added.

Aside from getting the restaurant ready, guests are assured that safety and health protocols are in place every time at the Hyatt even for private parties. In an earlier interview, Hyatt Food & Beverage director Ty Pauling said that in today's environment, Hyatt knows that it need to do to make theirxz guests feel comfortable. "We do this by following the proper protocols to keep them safe. In our restaurants and throughout the hotel, all Hyatt employees observe safety and health protocols in place such as frequent sanitation, washing of hands every 30 minutes and we have a team going around sanitizing 'high touch' areas."

A group of 10 or more can reserve a small party get together at Teppanyaki .

"All Hyatt hotels, including Saipan, were certified by Global Biorisk Advisory Council to ensure that we are ready to prevent, correct and provide proper response and recover from any potential infection," Pauling added.

Although short-staffed, Tomokane said that this will not be felt by guests as each staff gives their 110% every time. "On a given day, I used to oversee 30 to 40 culinary employees. But these days, I only see four at a time. Some of them have gone to other jobs—full-time or part-time but we want to bring them back.

"We miss the team, they miss us and I say that because it's the unity and the feel of family are what guests miss about this property… But of course in the meantime, the community can always expect the best from Hyatt. We are always here to serve, go the extra mile, and do the best we can because that is what the community loves about us," he added.

Hyatt Regency Saipan is located at Royal Palm Avenue, Micro Beach Road, Garapan. For more information about private parties at Teppanyaki, Miyako, and Giovanni's, call (670) 234-1234, look them up on Facebook: Hyatt Regency Saipan, and on their website http://saipan.regency.hyatt.com.

Apple unveils new iPhones for faster 5G wireless networks

Apple unveiled four new iPhones equipped with technology for use with faster new 5G wireless networks, hoping that demand for higher data speeds will spark demand for new phones.

That might not happen as quickly as Apple would like.

In a virtual presentation Tuesday, the company announced four 5G-enabled versions of the new iPhone 12 ranging in price from almost $700 to roughly $1,100. Apple also announced a new, less expensive version of its HomePod smart speaker.

Smartphone sales have been slowing for years as their technology has matured. That has meant far fewer gotta-have-it innovations that can drive demand and, at least until recently, increasingly pricey phones. Add to that pandemic-related economic crisis, and consumers have tended to eke as much life as possible out of their existing phones.

Apple, however, is clearly betting that 5G speeds could push many users off the fence. At its event, the company boasted about 5G capabilities and brought in Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg to champion the carrier's network.

5G is supposed to mean much faster speeds, making it quicker to download movies or games, for instance. But finding those speeds can be a challenge. While telecom operators have been rolling out 5G networks, significant boosts in speed are still uncommon in much of the world, including the U.S. So far, there are no popular new consumer applications that require 5G.

Updates in the new phones mostly amount to "incremental improvements" over predecessor iPhones, technology analyst Patrick Moorhead said, referring to 5G capabilities and camera upgrades on higher-end phones. But he suggested that if carriers build out their 5G networks fast enough, it could launch a "supercycle" in which large numbers of people switch to 5G phones.

That might be a big if. Mobile expert Carolina Milanesi of the firm Creative Strategies said economic pain caused by the global pandemic and accompanying job losses could easily restrain that buying impulse.

Apple's new models include the iPhone 12, which features a 6.1-inch display and starts at almost $800, and the iPhone 12 Mini, with a 5.4-inch display at almost $700. A higher-end iPhone 12 Pro with more powerful cameras will begin at roughly $1,000; the 12 Pro Max, with a 6.7-inch display, will set buyers back at least $1,100. Apple said the phones should be more durable. ***(AP)***

McConnell slates October revote on GOP COVID relief plan

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday that he's scheduling a procedural vote on a GOP COVID-19 relief bill next week, pushing aid to hard-hit businesses in a smaller-bore approach to virus relief that Democrats say they won't go for.

The Kentucky Republican says the first item of Senate business when the chamber returns next Monday will be a procedural vote on a scaled-back aid bill. Democrats filibustered a GOP-drafted aid bill last month and recent talks on a larger deal between Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., fell apart this past weekend, probably for good.

"Democrats have spent months blocking policies they do not even oppose. They say anything short of their multi-trillion-dollar wish list, jammed with non-COVID-related demands, is 'piecemeal' and not worth doing," McConnell said in a statement. "And she has worked hard to ensure that nothing is what American families get."

McConnell's move appears unlikely to work. The COVID relief debate appears to have gone back to a phase in which the participants have largely given up and are devoting time and effort to political positioning ahead of the election rather than negotiations and compromise.

For her part, Pelosi defended her demands for more than $2 trillion in COVID relief on a teleconference with other Democrats and a combative performance with CNN's Wolf Blitzer, who pressed her about shrugging off a recent $1.8 trillion White House offer. Pelosi said a handful of Democratic critics "have no idea about the particulars" of her negotiations with the administration.

President Donald Trump continues to agitate for "stimulus," saying that Capitol Hill Republicans should "go big" rather than the limited approach they've been advocating.

Opinion polls show that additional coronavirus relief is a higher priority for most voters than quickly approving Trump's nomination of Appeals Court Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. While many Republicans take a skeptical view of the need for more virus relief like special unemployment benefits or direct payments to most taxpayers, some GOP senators in difficult re-election races are eager for more aid.

Nation

Barrett bats away tough Democratic confirmation probing

WASHINGTON (AP)—Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett batted away Democrats' skeptical questions Tuesday on abortion, health care and a possible disputed-election fight over transferring presidential power, insisting in a long and lively confirmation hearing she would bring no personal agenda to the court but decide cases "as they come."

The 48-year-old appellate court judge declared her conservative views with often colloquial language, but refused many specifics. She declined to say whether she would recuse herself from any election-related cases involving President Donald Trump, who nominated her to fill the seat of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and is pressing to have her confirmed before the the Nov. 3 election.

"Judges can't just wake up one day and say I have an agenda — I like guns, I hate guns, I like abortion, I hate abortion — and walk in like a royal queen and impose their will on the world," Barrett told the Senate Judiciary Committee during its second day of hearings.

"It's not the law of Amy," she said. "It's the law of the American people."

Barrett returned to a Capitol Hill mostly shut down by COVID-19 protocols, the mood quickly shifting to a more confrontational tone from opening day. She was grilled by Democrats strongly opposed to Trump's nominee yet unable to stop her. Excited by the prospect of a judge aligned with the late Antonin Scalia, Trump's Republican allies are rushing ahead to install a 6-3 conservative court majority for years to come.

The president seemed pleased with her performance. "I think Amy's doing incredibly well," he said at the White House departing for a campaign rally.

Trump has said he wants a justice seated for any disputes arising from his heated election with Democrat Joe Biden, but Barrett testified she has not spoken to Trump or his team about election cases. Pressed by panel Democrats, she skipped past questions about ensuring the date of the election or preventing voter intimidation, both set in federal law, and the peaceful transfer of presidential power. She declined to commit to recusing herself from any post-election cases without first consulting the other justices.

"I can't offer an opinion on recusal without short-circuiting that entire process," she said.

A frustrated Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the panel, all but implored the nominee to be more specific about how she would handle landmark abortion cases, including Roe v. Wade and the follow-up Pennsylvania case Planned Parenthood v. Casey, which confirmed it in large part.

"It's distressing not to get a good answer," Feinstein told the judge.

Barrett was unmoved. "I don't have an agenda to try to overrule Casey," she said. "I have an agenda to stick to the rule of law and decide cases as they come."

She later declined to characterize the *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion as a "super-precedent" that must not be overturned.

Democrats had no such reticence.

"Let's not make any mistake about it," said California Sen. Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, appearing remotely due to COVID concerns as the hearing pushed into the evening.

Allowing Trump to fill the seat with Barrett "poses a threat to safe and legal abortion in our country," Harris said.

Democrats also criticized GOP priorities in forcing the Senate action as the country suffers from the pandemic and Congress squabbles over approving additional economic aid.

The committee chairman, Republican Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, opened the early 2th session d r coa iv rs restrictis thatk p it 6f limits to in p rso atted ance by members of the public.

AP
Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett speaks during her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020.

Supreme Court halts census in latest twist of 2020 count

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that the Trump administration can end census field operations early, in a blow to efforts to make sure minorities and hard-to-enumerate communities are properly counted in the crucial once-a-decade tally.

The decision was not a total loss for plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the administration's decision to end the count early. They managed to get nearly two extra weeks of counting people as the case made its way through the courts.

However, the ruling increased the chances of the Trump administration retaining control of the process that decides how many congressional seats each state gets — and by extension how much voting power each state has.

The Supreme Court justices' ruling came as the nation's largest association of statisticians, and even the U.S. Census Bureau's own census takers and partners, have been raising questions about the quality of the data being gathered — numbers that are used to determine how much federal funding and how many congressional seats are allotted to states.

After the Supreme Court's decision, the Census Bureau said field operations would end on Thursday.

At issue was a request by the Trump administration that the Supreme Court suspend a lower court's order extending the 2020 census through the end of October following delays caused by the pandemic. The Trump administration argued that the head count needed to end immediately to give the bureau time to meet a year-end deadline. Congress requires the bureau to turn in by Dec. 31 the figures used to decide the states' congressional seats — a process known as apportionment.

By sticking to the deadline, the Trump administration would end up controlling the numbers used for the apportionment, no matter who wins next month's presidential election.

In a statement, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the Supreme Court's decision "regrettable and disappointing," and said the administration's actions "threaten to politically and financially exclude many in America's most vulnerable communities from our democracy."

Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented from the high court's decision, saying "respondents will suffer substantial injury if the Bureau is permitted to sacrifice accuracy for expediency."

The Supreme Court ruling came in response to a lawsuit by a coalition of local governments and civil rights groups, arguing that minorities and others in hard-to-count communities would be missed if the census ended early. They said the schedule was cut short to accommodate a July order from President Donald Trump that would exclude people in the country illegally from being counted in the numbers used for apportionment.

Opponents of the order said it followed the strategy of the late Republican redistricting guru, Thomas Hofeller, who had advocated using voting-age citizens instead of the total population when it came to drawing legislative seats since that would favor Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

Last month, U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh in San Jose, California sided with the plaintiffs and issued an injunction suspending a Sept. 30 deadline for finishing the 2020 census and a Dec. 31 deadline for submitting the apportionment numbers. That caused the deadlines to revert back to a previous Census Bureau plan that had field operations ending Oct. 31 and the reporting of apportionment figures at the end of April 2021.

Trump, Biden zero in on swing states that are key to victory

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. (AP)—With Election Day just three weeks away, President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden concentrated Tuesday on battleground states both see as critical to clinching an Electoral College victory, tailoring their travel to best motivate voters who could cast potentially decisive ballots.

Biden went to Florida to court seniors, looking to deliver a knockout blow in a state Trump needs to win while trying to woo a group whose support for the president has slipped. And Trump visited Pennsylvania, arguably the most important state on the electoral map, unleashing fierce attacks on Biden's fitness for office in his opponent's backyard.

"He's shot, folks. I hate to tell you, he's shot," Trump told a big rally crowd in Johnstown, saying there was extra pressure on him to win because Biden was the worst presidential candidate of all time. "Can you imagine if you lose to a guy like this? It's unbelievable."

In his second rally since contracting the coronavirus, Trump spoke for more than an hour to a crowd of thousands packed in tightly and mostly maskless. Like the night before in Florida, Trump seemed healthy, and his rhetoric on the pandemic — including the dubious claim that it was mostly a thing of the past — changed little despite his own illness, except for his threat to kiss audience members to prove his immunity.

Trump made a local pitch, hammering home the claim that a Democratic administration could limit fracking in areas where the economy is heavily dependent on energy, despite Biden's proposal to only bar new leases on federal land, a fraction of U.S. fracking operations. And Trump, touting his elimination of a federal rule that would have brought more low-income housing to the suburbs, zeroed in on groups whose support he has struggled to retain, including female voters turned off by his rhetoric.

"So I ask you to do me a favor. Suburban women: Will you please like me? Please. Please. I saved your damn neighborhood, OK?" Trump said. "The other thing: I don't have that much time to be that nice. You know, I can do it, but I gotta go quickly."

Asia

Supporters of new house speaker Lord Allan Velasco gestures after posing for pictures at the House of Representatives in Quezon city, Philippines on Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020. AP

PH Congress standoff ends as 1 of 2 speakers resigns

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The leader of the Philippines' House of Representatives announced his resignation Tuesday, ending a standoff with a rival speaker that has stalled the passage of next year's budget, including funds for fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano made the announcement in a Facebook video message from his neighborhood while legislators were ratifying the election of his rival Rep. Lord Allan Velasco as speaker. Both are allies of President Rodrigo Duterte, who had brokered a power-sharing deal that went awry this week and set off the standoff.

Cayetano and his allied legislators mocked Velasco's election Monday as speaker by his supporters in a sports club outside Congress. He said he was giving way to avoid damage to the 300-strong legislative chamber as a democratic institution.

"If we bastardize Congress, we're also bastardizing our country," Cayetano said in his video message.

Despite the easing of the impasse, Duterte called Cayetano and Velasco to a meeting at the presidential palace Tuesday, mainly to ensure the rapid passage of the proposed 4.5 trillion peso ($90 billion) budget, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said.

The military chief of staff, Gen. Gilbert Gapay, said the military has kept an eye on the House impasse. "We were just getting prepared in case it gets out of hand because sometimes during situations like this, many may take advantage," Gapay said at a news conference.

Duterte brokered a power-sharing deal last year in which Cayetano would assume the speakership for 15 months until this month, to be followed by Velasco, who would serve as speaker for the remaining 21 months.

Cayetano recently offered to step down, but his camp said a majority of lawmakers voted to reject his resignation. After Cayetano steered the initial approval of the budget, his camp abruptly suspended congressional sessions, preempting Velasco's assumption of the speakership under the power-sharing deal.

Several lawmakers protested that the suspension blocked them from scrutinizing the budget, including crucial appropriations for the Department of Health, which is spearheading efforts to contain coronavirus outbreaks.

With top police and military generals standing beside him, Duterte went on TV last week to warn that he would intercede if the House leadership crisis threatens the passage of the budget. He later called for a special session of the House starting Tuesday to ensure the budget's approval.

Japan protests to China for entering Japanese waters

TOKYO (AP)—Tokyo has lodged protests to Beijing over the entry of Chinese coast guard ships into Japan's territorial waters off disputed East China Sea islands and their refusal to move out for a third day Tuesday, Japanese officials said.

The two Chinese ships entered the Japanese-claimed waters Sunday morning, appearing to approach a Japanese fishing boat carrying three crew members. They have remained there, ignoring repeated warnings and exit demands by the Japanese side, Japanese coast guard officials said.

Chinese coast guard vessels routinely violate territorial waters around the Japanese-controlled southern islands of Senkaku, which China calls Diaoyu and also claims.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said Tuesday that it was "extremely regrettable" that the two Chinese coast guard ships were still in Japanese waters. Japan "strictly protested" to the Chinese side and demanded that the Chinese ships immediately move out of Japanese waters, Kato said.

He said Japan would firmly defend its territorial waters, land and airspace "with a sense of urgency."

Japanese coast guard officials said the fishing boat with the three crew members was safely protected, but declined to give any other details.

China's "continuous attempt to change the status quo by force" in the East China Sea where Chinese warships routinely operate and its repeated intrusion into the Japanese waters despite Tokyo's protests is intolerable, Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said.

World

UK defends new virus restrictions

LONDON (AP)—Britain's government on Tuesday defended its new three-tier system of COVID-19 risks and restrictions, but critics suggested it was too little, too late amid reports that the government's own scientific advisers had recommended tougher action three weeks ago.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled the new system Monday in an orchestrated series of events that culminated with an address to the nation. The plan sets out progressively stricter measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, based on local infection rates, and put regions into three risk groups: moderate, high and very high.

The new system comes three weeks after the Conservative government's last nationwide program, which banned gatherings of more than six people and required pubs and restaurants to close at 10 p.m. The government's scientific advisers at that time recommended that ministers go further, suggesting a two-to three-week national lockdown to short-circuit rapidly rising infection rates.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick told the BBC on Tuesday that the government took "robust action" in response to the scientists' advice, but ministers had to balance those recommendations against other impacts.

"The prime minister has to balance protecting people's lives and the NHS from the virus while also prioritizing things that matter to us as a society, like education and keeping as many people in employment as possible," Jenrick said. "(He also must ensure) that other health risks, like mental health and illnesses, don't get neglected as a result."

Britain already has the deadliest outbreak in Europe, with about 43,000 reported deaths, and Europe as a whole reported a record number of new cases last week, over 700,000, according to the World Health Organization.

The government said 143 people had died within 28 days of testing positive for COVID-19 in the 24 hours until Tuesday morning.

Britain's daily number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases has more than tripled in the past three weeks, with 17,234 further cases confirmed Tuesday.

Infection rates are rising across all age groups and regions. The highest infection rates are in the northeast and northwest, with more than 600 cases per 100,000 people in Liverpool and nearly 500 per 100,000 in Manchester, compared with fewer than 100 cases per 100,000 in many parts of London.

"The trend in COVID related deaths is starting to rise quickly which is hugely concerning," said Dr. Yvonne Doyle, medical director at Public Health England. "We have seen cases increasing especially in older age groups which is leading to more hospital admissions. This is a stark reminder for us to follow the guidelines."

The Office for National Statistics reported Tuesday that the unemployment rate jumped to 4.5% in the three months through August, compared with 4.1% in the period through July, as employers laid off workers in response to the pandemic. There are strong fears that the unemployment rate will jump further when a government jobs-support program ends at the end of the month.

Andrew Hayward, professor of infectious disease epidemiology at University College London, said it wasn't surprising that coronavirus cases had continued to rise since the government chose to implement less restrictive measures than its advisers recommended.

"I think it is very disappointing that we had clear advice—we needed to take decisive action several weeks ago," Hayward told the BBC. "And really, since that time, all we've done is send students back, introduced the rule of six, advised people to work from home if possible but not really promoted that in any real way and closed the pubs an hour early."

Even under the new three-tier system, the Liverpool region was the only part of England to be immediately placed in the highest risk category where the toughest restrictions will be imposed. The "very high" risk tier communities will face restrictions including closing pubs—apart from those that serve meals—and, if local authorities want, other venues such as gyms and casinos.

Deaths mount in Armenia-Azerbaijan clashes amid truce calls

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP)—Death and injury tolls rose Tuesday as fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces raged for a third week over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the United States urged both sides to adhere to a Russia-brokered cease-fire reached over the weekend.

Nagorno-Karabakh military officials said 16 servicemen were killed, bringing the total number of dead among troops to 532 since Sept. 27, when the latest outburst of fighting flared up in the decades-old conflict.

Azerbaijan hasn't disclosed its military losses, and the overall toll is likely to be much higher with both sides regularly claiming to have inflicted significant military casualties.

Azerbaijani authorities said 42 civilians have been killed on their side since the start of the fighting. Nagorno-Karabakh human rights ombudsman Artak Beglaryan late Monday reported at least 31 civilian deaths in the breakaway region in the past two weeks. Hundreds have been wounded.

The deadly clashes marked the biggest escalation of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which lies in Azerbaijan but has been under control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since the end of a separatist war in 1994.

After more than 10 hours of marathon talks in Moscow, foreign ministers from Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a cease-fire deal that took effect Saturday. Russia has a security pact with Armenia, but it also has cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan, allowing it to play mediator.

But immediately after the deal took effect, both Armenia and Azerbaijan have accused each other of breaching it with continued attacks.

On Tuesday, Azerbaijani officials said Armenian forces shelled some of its regions, and Nagorno-Karabakh officials said Azerbaijan launched "large-scale military operations" along the front line. Each party customarily denies the other side's claims.

Ali Rastgou, a deputy governor of the Iranian province of Eastern Azerbaijan, said a missile hit farmland 70 kilometers (some 43 miles) northeast of Tabriz, Iran's third-largest city, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. He said there were no casualties.

IRNA said that since the clashes started, more than 50 rockets hit the border areas of Eastern Azerbaijan.

The fighting has taken a severe toll on residents of Nagorno-Karabakh. In Stepanakert, the capital of the separatist territory that came under intense shelling last week, people huddle in the basements of apartment buildings or other shelters, fearing new attacks.

Several believers in the town of Shusha prayed Tuesday in the Holy Savior Cathedral, which last week had its dome pierced by a shell.

Environment

Saving our Corals: Eyes of the Reef Marianas

IVA MAURIN

Students from the Northern Marianas College piloted the Eyes of the Reef Marianas program in the CNMI, with training conducted by the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality's Division of Coastal Resources Management last Saturday at Obyan Beach.

IVA MAURIN

Coastal Resources Management communications specialist Mallory Muña talks about how global climate change contributes to coral bleaching, and how this affects the CNMI.

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Last Saturday, a small group of students from the Northern Marianas College spent a couple of hours training at Obyan Beach to be the "eyes" of the reef here in the CNMI, learning how to spot early signs of coral abnormalities, to help local scientists help our corals. You, too, can be one of them.

Called "Eyes of the Reef Marianas," the citizen science program empowers community members to get involved in scientific work by becoming part of the community monitoring program.

In this case, it means training the community to spot the early signs of coral bleaching diseases and abnormalities, for crown of thorns starfish outbreaks, and to report them to the Marine Monitoring Program coral biologists at the Division of Coastal Resources Management of the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

Coral reefs, here and around the rest of the world, have to deal with different threats, a lot of which are predominantly caused or exacerbated by human activity.

Through the citizen science program, Eyes of the Reef, we can all get trained to know how to detect early signs of bleaching, as well as to identify and report to scientists the threats we see to the corals. Early detection leads to rapid response, and so together, we can help protect and save this precious natural resource.

Mycah Yobech, one of the students who trained over the weekend, stressed the importance of accessing the knowledge, and in being able to aid scientists with their work in rehabilitating and helping corals recover from bleaching events.

"I never realized how much of our coral we lose… With a training like this, we're able to spot [coral bleaching], and so, when we're just out and about, if we see an increase of it, we can help scientists by letting them know and then letting them be the ones to act, rather than us doing something reckless. We are the eyes, and they can follow through with the action."

Coral bleaching and climate change

"Bleaching has nothing to do with Clorox. It's just a misconception," was CRM marine biologist technician John Iguel's straight answer when one of the students asked if the cleaning product is the culprit to coral bleaching.

Corals are being affected by global climate change. The impacts to corals from climate change are extensive, and it's been happening all over the world, including CNMI waters.

Climate change causes sea level rise, as well as the rise in sea surface temperature, which results in decreased coral growth rate, when corals are unhealthy. When corals go through a bleaching event, they become more defenseless against other diseases and abnormalities, as well as become more susceptible to land-based sources of pollution.

CRM communications specialist Mallory Muña, however, clarifies that coral bleaching is a natural event. Corals, when they bleach, naturally can come back and be healthy corals once more, but in long periods of really hot temperature, in really hot water, the likelihood that they are able to come back and recover from a coral bleaching event and become healthy again gets less and less, the longer they stay bleached.

"Coral bleaching is historically a natural event that occurs to coral reefs like all across the world. However, the problem that we're experiencing, and what's making it more of an issue, is that instead of recovering like they normally did, were the microscopic algae returned back to their to the coral, they're staying away for longer periods of time usually because the water stays hot for longer periods of time, which doesn't allow the coral to recover."

The problem that we are experiencing with coral bleaching, for the past few decades, is that water temperatures are getting hotter and staying hotter for longer periods of time, which makes corals less likely to recover from coral bleaching events.

"We've had a number of bleaching events in the CNMI. In the last seven years, we've had four major bleaching events. One of these bleaching events resulted in a huge decrease in the amount of Staghorn coral cover," Muña added.

Approximately 85% of staghorn corals in the Saipan lagoon died, as coral reef resources got impacted by severe thermal stress events in 2013 and 2014.

Iguel also highlighted that there are a lot of things going on throughout the year that contributed to the catastrophic bleaching event.

"The tide changed, the tides were longer, and all that made it harder for the reef to flush itself. There's not a lot of water movement in the lagoon. That's what kept all that warm water [stay] longer at that time. A lot of factors came into play, and then the storms came and just made it worse."

When corals die

In corals live a microscopic algae, which gives it, among a number of things, its color. Coral bleaching happens when that algae leaves the coral animal, usually to get away from the "threat" of an increased temperature. The algae leaving causes the coral to bleach and become white, exposing the coral skeleton.

The algae and the coral are in a symbiotic relationship, one cannot live without the other. The coral can survive for a little bit without the algae, but if it doesn't come back, it ends up dying. The algae provides them with food and nutrients, which helps it grow. Without that, the coral just can't survive.

CRM biologist Denise Perez explains that it takes quite a few weeks for it to happen.

"When the first the microscopic algae leave the coral, it can survive for a few weeks like that. But over time, it's going to starve, and then die. And so then, that's when you see other types of algae start to grow over it."

The algae that grows after a coral dies can be exacerbated by land-based sources of pollution such as runoffs. Fertilizer, for example, that washes off from the land to the waters, feeds algae and basically increases the amount of algae that is in the water.

When they die, Perez says it is best to leave the corals where they are. Coral skeletons are also important for the structure of the reef, provides habitat for high diversity, and also helps in absorbing wave energy.

Skeletons or dead corals left in their place provide an opportunity for other organisms to settle on it, and like forests, rejuvenate—find ways for other species to come and replace the area that had been emptied.

"It's actually better to leave it because there's preferences for new coral larvae on what they like to settle on, and they like to settle on coral skeletons... Sometimes, there's a crustose coralline algae, and that actually helps signal coral larvae to settle. That's a good kind of algae that you would want around those kind of skeletons."

Saving the community means protecting our corals

Corals protect the CNMI community by absorbing a lot of the wave energy. It provides protection from storms, helps prevent flooding, and in some places, even helps prevent tsunamis. As a fishing community, we get a lot of resources from the sea, with corals serving as habitats for fish. If corals die, and that habitat gets removed, then, fishing gets affected too.

Not only that, corals also play a major part in the local economy.

"We make most of our money off of here in tourism. Tourists come because we have pristine beaches and water. People come because of the natural beauty and the abundance of resources that they can find… and without a healthy coral reef, we risk losing our number one source of economic revenue," Muña shares.

"Most of our money are from, and a lot of people work in the tourism industry. Coral reefs are important for protection for fish habitats, but they're also important for our livelihoods as people, because we live and work and do everything revolving our reefs, revolving our natural resources."

And so, it really is important to keep the corals healthy, and for everyone to help out, especially since according to Muña, we have a limited number of scientists—biologists who do coral work on the island, and yet, there is a lot to be done. This is where citizen science comes in, where we can all help.

For the "Eyes of the Reef Marianas" program, anyone interested will be trained and capacitated by CRM to assist the biologists to be able to spot and report coral anomalies. As "eyes of the reef," we can help spot coral bleaching signs, diseases and abnormalities, crown of thorn starfish outbreaks, and other nuisances like green debris or physical damage to the corals, so scientists can check them out and find resolutions to the problem.

To be an eye of the reef, contact Mallory Muna at mmuna@dcrm.gov.mp, or the DCRM Marine Monitoring Program, headed by lead biologist Dave Benavente at dbenavente@dcrm.gov.mp. Learn more about the program too by visiting https://eormarianas.org.

Life & Style

Korean boy band BTS faces uproar in China over war comments

SEOUL (AP)—Chinese nationalists erupted in anger at South Korean boy band BTS after its leader thanked Korean War veterans for their sacrifices.

The singer, who goes by RM, made the remark in a recorded acceptance speech for an award from the Korea Society for promoting U.S.-Korean relations.

"We will always remember the history of pain that our two nations shared together and the sacrifices of countless men and women," RM said in the speech, which included no mention of China.

"After 70 years, the world we are living in is much closer than before. Boundaries in many aspects are getting more blurred," RM said. "As members of the global community, we should build a deeper understanding and solidarity to be happier together."

Chinese internet users and state media took RM's comments as a slap at China, whose soldiers fought alongside North Korean forces during their failed attempt to annex South Korea in the 1950-53 war. They accused RM of ignoring the role played by China in the war, which Chinese Communist Party propaganda blames on the United States, instead of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's attack on South Korea.

"Before, I thought some BTS songs were pretty good. Now, they seem to be covered in excrement," said a commenter on the microblog service Sina Weibo. "Insulting China is absolutely not allowed."

An account titled "BTS Insults China" had been viewed more than 4.5 million times, according to Sina Weibo.

"Many Chinese netizens pointed out that the speech plays up to U.S. netizens, but the country played the role of aggressor in the war," said an article in the Global Times newspaper, controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

The attacks reflect Beijing's assertiveness abroad and enduring Chinese sensitivity about the Korean Peninsula.

Asked about the controversy, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, said, "What I want to say is that it should be our common pursuit to take history as a mirror, face the future, cherish peace and promote friendship."

The ruling party uses the entirely state-controlled media to whip up anger against foreign companies, celebrities or governments that take steps Beijing dislikes.

With concert halls shut, NY Philharmonic takes to sidewalk

NEW YORK (AP)—With performance halls shut because of the coronavirus pandemic, the best concert venue a violinist could hope for one recent October Friday was a sidewalk in the Bronx.

Fiona Simon tuned her instrument as she prepared for one of her only public performances with the New York Philharmonic in months.

The setting was a far cry from the orchestra's usual home at Manhattan's Lincoln Center. Traffic hummed and sirens wailed as a crew laid cables and unloaded speakers from the back of a double-parked pickup truck.

But Simon said the pop-up concert—one of several the Philharmonic has been playing around the city this fall—filled a need she's had since indoor performances stopped in March, depriving musicians of not just a paycheck, but a sense of purpose.

"You're not a complete musician if you're just playing for yourself," Simon said.

Simon, a native of England who joined the New York Philharmonic in 1985, says she has struggled to cope with not having an audience, sometimes performing for friends virtually over the phone.

"I think it's a fundamental human need," she said.

Members of the NY Phil Bandwagon, from left, violinist Fiona Simon, countertenor and producer Anthony Roth Costanzo, violinist Curtis Stewart and viola player Robert Rinehart perform in the Flushing neighborhood of the Queens borough of New York, Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. AP

The Philharmonic came up with the idea for a series of outdoor, pop-up performances over the summer, even as it was forced to lay off or furlough nearly half its staff as it faced a multimillion-dollar budget deficit.

On that Friday, Simon and a few colleagues played three corners of the city as part of the series they're calling the NY Phil Bandwagon. The first show of the day was outside a Bronx school, the second outside a public library in Queens and the final one in a Brooklyn park.

The bandwagon itself—a red Ford pickup truck—rolls up to the curb carrying a sound system, music stands, lights and orange traffic cones to keep the audience socially distant. The musicians follow in a van.

French Genghis Khan exhibit put off over interference claims

PARIS (AP)—A French museum has postponed an exhibit about Mongol Emperor Genghis Khan citing interference by the Chinese government, which it accuses of trying to rewrite history.

The Château des ducs de Bretagne history museum in the western city of Nantes said that it was putting the show about the fearsome 13th century leader on hold for over three years.

In a statement Monday, the museum's director Bertrand Guillet said "we made the decision to stop this production in the name of the human, scientific and ethical values that we defend."

It said the Chinese authorities demanded that certain words, including "Genghis Khan," "Empire" and "Mongol" be taken out of the show. Subsequently, it said that they asked for power over exhibition brochures, legends and maps.

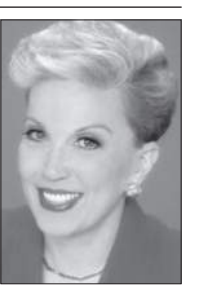
The spat comes as China has taken a tougher line against ethnic Mongols, many of whom live in the northern province of Inner Mongolia.

The exhibit was planned in collaboration with the Inner Mongolia Museum in Hohhot, China. But tensions arose, the Nantes museum said, when the Chinese Bureau of Cultural Heritage pressured the museum for changes to the original plan, "including notably elements of biased rewriting of Mongol culture in favor of a new national narrative."

Cross-dressing causes fracture in a solid longtime marriage

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been together for 11 years, married for eight. We have been through a lot together, which has served to strengthen our marriage. My husband is my Prince Charming and my happily forever after.

Recently, he has discovered that he likes wearing women's clothes. It started with him wearing women's underwear under his clothes, which didn't bother me. I even bought him a few pair I liked. It has progressed quickly.

He assures me that he isn't gay, he does not want to become a woman or want to dress in women's clothes full time. However, some of his behaviors have changed, and his wearing women's clothing has increased. When I tried discussing my concerns with him, he said I was being irrational. We fought, and I thought we had worked some things out, but he still has an attitude.

I'm terrified that this is the beginning of the end of my marriage, and I don't want to lose him. But I also don't know just how much of this I can accept or how far he wants to go. He says if I can't accept it, he will stop doing it. But we will both know that he has that desire, and I don't want to stifle something that seems to mean so much to him. I have no one I can talk to about this, Abby. Please help.

STRUGGLING IN FLORIDA

DEAR STRUGGLING: Take the opportunity to learn all you can about cross-dressing. More men than you may think engage in it, and the majority are heterosexual. An excellent support group for cross-dressers and wives of men who need (not "LIKE") to cross-dress is The Society for the Second Self (Tri Ess). Its website is tri-ess.org. Go there and you will find the support and answers you're looking for. Keep the lines of communication with your husband open and honest. Only the two of you can determine how to navigate through this. For many couples, it's not necessarily a deal-breaker.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: When I was 21, I got pregnant with "Earl," a guy who had nothing to his name but a bicycle. It was three weeks after we met. Earl was 24. Two years later we split. I was working and he was a stay-at-home dad, and I couldn't stand it.

Five years later, I married a very wealthy man, moved to another country and lived a life of luxury. Thirteen years later we split. I left our small island and moved back, still well off on my own.

Earl was my rock and is a totally different man now. Sixteen years later, I have fallen head over heels for him. He has become everything I've always wanted. Our son wasn't crazy about it at first (he's 18), but now loves it. Earl's mother said she knew it would end up this way. My parents have reservations. Do you think we have a fighting chance?

NEW EXPAT IN NEVADA

DEAR NEW EXPAT: Earl is not the person he was and, frankly, neither are you. Do the two of you have a fighting chance? Absolutely. However, before marrying anyone again, it is important that you discuss this with an attorney and have in place a signed prenuptial agreement. While it may not seem romantic, it's the intelligent thing to do.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HOBBES, DO YOU THINK OUR MORALITY IS DEFINED BY OUR ACTIONS, OR BY WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS?
I THINK OUR ACTIONS SHOW WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS.
I RESENT THAT!

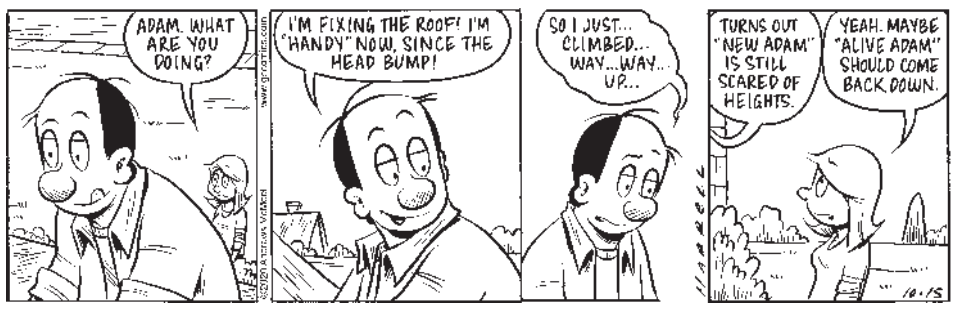
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

AH, LANCE WELLINGTON...
HE WAS CLASS PRESIDENT, VALEDICTORIAN, AND CAPTAIN OF THE BASKETBALL TEAM
BUT I WAS THE POLKA KING!
LANCE MUST'VE BEEN SO ENVIOUS

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ADAM. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M FIXING THE ROOF! I'M "HANDY" NOW, SINCE THE HEAD BUMP!
SO I JUST... CLIMBED... WAY...WAY.. UP...
TURNS OUT "NEW ADAM" IS STILL SCARED OF HEIGHTS.
YEAH. MAYBE "ALIVE ADAM" SHOULD COME BACK DOWN.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

LOOK, WE SHOULD GET THIS BALONEY. IT'S MARKED "MANAGER'S SPECIAL."
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE MAKES IT A "MANAGER'S SPECIAL"?
PROBABLY BECAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE TO EAT IT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

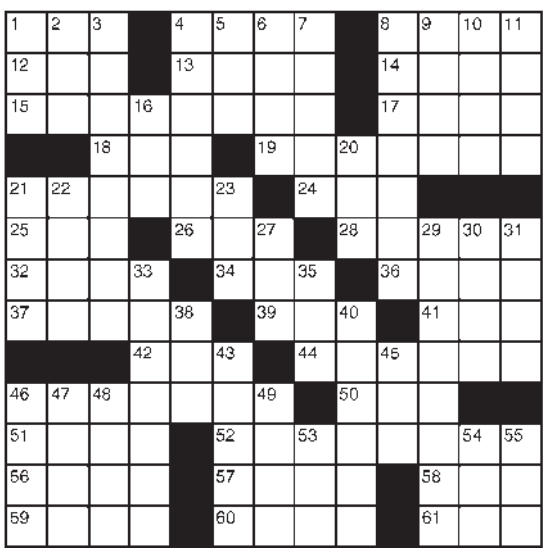
ACROSS
1 "Bow-wow!"
4 Seized vehicle
8 Achy
12 Caustic cleaner
13 Ms. Brockovich
14 Sloth's home
15 Evaluative response
17 Authentic
18 Bathroom, to a Londoner
19 Grads-to-be
21 Some beers
24 Chatter
25 First numero
26 Kibosh
28 Facial treatments
32 Aerial stunt
34 Speed (up)
36 Comfy-cozy
37 Hypnotized
39 "Cheers" bartender
41 Body art, for short
42 Ann Patchett's "— Canto"
44 Zodiac bull
46 Cook briefly
50 Sob
51 Iranian money
52 Amount charged by an attorney
56 Rim
57 From the start
58 Corn spike
59 Unpaid TV ads
60 Dove calls
61 Tours season

DOWN
1 TV alien
2 Deli bread
3 Lighthearted
4 Given a second chance
5 Epoch
6 Snapshots
7 In tune
8 Zebra patterns
9 Popular cookie
10 Caboose
11 Congers
16 Female hare
20 Snooze
21 Humdinger
22 Shortly
23 — Lancelot
27 Ballot markings
29 Price to participate
30 Hawaiian feast
31 Boot camp VIPs
33 Wilma and Fred's kid
35 Cistern
38 Old Olds
40 Showy parrots
43 Pale purple
45 Web address
46 Get ready, briefly
47 Helps
48 Sitar music
49 Carson's successor
53 Earth (Pref.)
54 Dig in
55 Before

Solution time: 24 mins.

B	B	C		R	A	V	E		H	E	S	S
-	E	I		E	D	I	T		A	N	N	A
O	T	T		D	O	I	N	G	W	E	L	L
C	H	I	N	A			A	A	A			
			I	R	M	A		L	I	S	T	S
W	E	-	L	M	A	D	E		I	L	I	E
I	R	E		Y	A	R	D	S		A	D	A
D	I	N	G		M	A	J	E	O	V	E	R
E	N	T	E	R		W	A	N	E			
			A	F	T			E	R	U	P	T
O	V	E	H	D	O	I	N	G		M	O	I
P	E	R	U		A	L	P	A		P	O	D
P	E	R	P		D	E	L	L		S	L	Y

Yesterday's answer 10-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ncuti Gatwa, 28; Vanessa Marcil, 52; Emeril Lagasse, 61; Sarah Ferguson, 61.

Happy Birthday: Stand your ground and make a statement. Remain calm, and use intelligence to make your point to help get your way. It's time to position yourself for the future and to put the past behind you. Don't dwell on what you cannot change. What you want will be granted if you focus on what's important to you and strive to achieve peace and tranquility. Your numbers are 3, 14, 20, 23, 31, 37, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Pick up the pace. Don't let anyone mess with you. Remain focused on your objective. You will overcome any obstacle that stands in your way. The best is yet to come, so hang on and take one step at a time. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* You'll face a challenge if you can't come to terms with what's happening around you. Take a step back and look at every angle before you make a decision that has lasting effects. Be smart, and set strategic plans in motion. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You've got what it takes to make a difference. Don't waste time on the impossible; focus on what you can do, and don't look back. Walk away from risky situations and people who try to lead you astray. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Emotions will dictate how well you do. Buck up, and refuse to let trivial matters get to you. Back away if someone doesn't see things your way. Getting into a dispute will not be worth your time, effort or the trouble it will cause. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Do something energetic. Self-improvement projects will bring the best results. Do your own thing, and let others do as they please. Concentrate more on you and less on outside influences. Anger will lead to setbacks, not gains. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Say what's on your mind, but don't force your will on others. Kind gestures, truth and understanding will win support. Use your imagination, and you will come up with a plan that will catch on and set the trend. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Listen to your heart, and take a passionate approach to achieve your goal. Refuse to let anyone stand between you and what you want. Look for innovative ways to deal with negativity, and you will surpass expectations. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Choose a unique lifestyle that accommodates the changes you want to implement. Remembering what has made you happy in the past will encourage you to start planning to backtrack where you left off. Personal and spiritual growth are favored. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* You can help others without jeopardizing your health, finances or reputation. Make it clear what you are willing to do, and refuse to let anyone talk you into ramping up your contribution. Someone will mislead you if you are gullible. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Let go of situations that consume you. Anger isn't going to help you accomplish what you set out to do. Concentrate on the changes you want to make, and work alongside the people willing to help you make your dreams come true. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Look over contracts and agreements. Update documents, and be sure to handle your finances with care. Moderation will be necessary to avoid money troubles. Refuse to let someone interfere with or control you. Verify the information you receive before you agree to anything. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* How you help others will lead to unexpected rewards. A change to how you handle a legal, financial or health issue will lead to positive results. A partnership will allow you to expand your ideas and plans. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are proactive, ambitious and persuasive. You are charismatic and mysterious.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6				3	1	2		
	9	8	6					
7			5	2				
				9			1	
	6						8	
	3			5				
				6	9			2
					7	1	4	
		7	2	1				3

Difficulty Level ★★★ 10/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	5	6	3	8	2	4	7	1
3	1	2	7	4	9	8	6	5
7	8	4	6	1	5	3	2	9
4	9	1	2	3	7	6	5	8
2	6	7	8	5	4	1	9	3
5	3	8	9	6	1	2	4	7
1	4	9	5	2	3	7	8	6
6	7	3	4	9	8	5	1	2
8	2	5	1	7	6	9	3	4

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND (1916-2020) Solution: 9 letters

D	N	S	C	G	A	L	A	N	T	E	H	R	E	D
O	E	I	N	A	L	E	M	E	O	S	U	G	N	H
O	A	V	B	E	I	V	V	I	L	O	A	I	I	S
H	I	A	R	O	O	T	S	V	T	O	W	S	A	I
E	R	D	A	E	R	A	L	I	C	E	R	E	T	T
I	P	E	S	I	R	A	P	V	H	A	S	L	N	I
R	O	T	H	G	I	E	L	T	D	U	V	E	O	R
E	R	T	R	L	K	E	H	N	R	A	O	R	F	B
S	T	E	W	A	R	T	O	A	L	B	E	R	T	E
S	D	B	N	R	I	F	C	L	M	D	S	E	O	N
E	R	S	O	W	Y	L	E	R	D	I	L	I	K	J
L	A	L	E	R	A	Y	L	I	H	R	L	P	Y	A
B	W	N	N	R	T	N	E	A	T	O	I	T	O	M
A	O	E	K	Y	E	N	G	A	C	E	M	B	O	I
G	H	U	G	H	E	S	E	M	A	J	O	A	N	N

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Airport, Albert, Alice, Benjamin, Bette, Bird, British, Cagney, Call, Clark, Davis, Eddie, Errol, Flynn, Fonda, Fontaine, Gable, Galante, Gisele, Gone With the Wind, Hamilton, Heiress, Henry, Hood, Howard, Hughes, James, Joan, Leigh, Livvie, Melanie, Mills, Mohr, Paris, Pierre, Read, Robin, Role, Roots, Ruse, Snake Pit, Stewart, Tokyo, Tour, USO, Valley, Vivien

Yesterday's Answer: Sensitive

The NEW **Treasury 41** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Rays move closer to World Series

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Joey Wendle hit a go-ahead, two-run single two batters after another critical error by José Altuve, and the Tampa Bay Rays rallied for a 5-2 win against the Houston Astros on Tuesday night that moved them within one victory of the second World Series appearance in franchise history.

Tampa Bay took a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven AL Championship Series at Petco Park. Towering righty Tyler Glasnow, who grew up just north of Los Angeles, will try to deliver the Rays their first pennant in 12 seasons on Wednesday night when he opposes Zack Greinke.

Tampa Bay reached the World Series in 2008 before losing to the Philadelphia Phillies.

The innovative Rays, managed by former big league catcher Kevin Cash, had one of baseball's lowest payrolls during the pandemic-shortened season and still finished with the AL's best record at 40-20. They often have a different player come up big every night, whether it's a batter or reliever—or sometimes both. They've also played spectacular defense.

The Astros got into the postseason with a 29-31 record before going 5-1 to reach the ALCS. But they've looked nothing like the team that won the AL pennant two of the last three seasons and they remain villains in many peoples' eyes for their sign-stealing scandal three years ago en route to a World Series title.

After Diego Castillo pitched the ninth for his second save, stranding two baserunners, he clapped his hands and the Rays celebrated with their usual handshake line.

The Astros fell apart in the sixth, when the Rays sent 11 batters to the plate and scored five runs on four hits, two hit batters and Altuve's error at second base. One of the runs was unearned.

Losing pitcher José Urquidy held Tampa Bay to two singles through five scoreless innings before Randy Arozarena singled leading off the sixth. Brandon Lowe hit a grounder to Altuve, who went for a routine forceout but short-hopped the throw and it skipped past shortstop Carlos Correa and into left field.

Enoli Paredes replaced Urquidy, and Yandy Diaz singled to load the bases. Wendle lined a single off third baseman Alex Bregman's glove to give Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead.

Manuel Margot, whose three-run homer in Game 2 followed the first of Altuve's two errors, laid down Tampa Bay's first sacrifice bunt of the season. Paredes hit Kevin Kiermaier with a pitch to load the bases and then hit Willy Adames with a pitch to bring in another run.

Pinch-hitter Hunter Renfroe, who like Margot began his career with the San Diego Padres, flared a double into right to bring in two more runs. Renfroe and Margot were traded to the Rays in separate deals last offseason. The Padres reached the playoffs for the first time in 14 years but were swept in the NL Division Series by the rival Los Angeles Dodgers.

Left-hander Ryan Yarbrough pitched into the sixth for the win, holding the Astros to two runs and three hits while striking out five and walking two.

Yarbrough allowed Altuve's homer in the first inning, his second of the series. Michael Brantley's homer to left leading off the sixth chased Yarbrough.

Altuve has 17 career postseason home run, tying teammate George Springer for most in franchise history.

Two batters after Altuve's shot, Bregman missed a home run by a matter of inches as Kiermaier made a leaping catch of his drive near the top of the fence in center.

Altuve also homered in the first inning of the opener, a 2-1 Rays win.

AP

Tampa Bay Rays center fielder Kevin Kiermaier makes a leaping catch on a fly ball by Houston Astros Carlos Correa during the third inning in Game 3 of the American League Championship Series, Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020, in San Diego.

Costly errors from Altuve

Altuve was the AL MVP in 2017 when his Astros sometimes knew exactly what pitches were coming.

Now, he doesn't even know where his own throws are going.

Altuve committed his fourth throwing error this postseason and third of the AL Championship Series.

The normally reliable second baseman has an undeniable case of the yips, and it has hurt the Astros badly. Altuve also made two throwing errors in Game 2 of the ALCS, contributing significantly to the Astros' 4-2 loss. His three errors in the last two games led to five runs while prolonging rallies that would have been largely shut down by solid defensive play.

"We're giving him all the support that we can. Houston manager Dusty Baker said. "Nobody feels worse than Jose, because he takes it every series and takes it to heart. He's one of ours, and we've all been through this before. No inning like this. It hurts us all to see him hurting."

Baker also said Altuve will play second base when the Astros attempt to avoid elimination on Wednesday night in Game 4: "Without a doubt. That doesn't help us (to make a change), and it would certainly kill him."

Braves hang on for 2-0 lead over Dodgers

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Ozzie Albies homered into the Braves bullpen in the ninth inning for the second straight night, and Mark Melancon once again grabbed the ball on the fly.

Atlanta had a five-run lead at the time. By the time the reliever to the mound, the lead was down to one. Melancon held on once again.

Freddie Freeman also homered for the second night in a row, and the streaking Braves beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 8-7 Tuesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the National League Championship Series.

Atlanta became just the fourth team in major league history to begin a postseason 7-0 on a night made more remarkable by Melancon's bullpen grab.

"That's more home runs than I've caught my entire life, let alone one season," Melancon said. "Hopefully tomorrow night is three in a row."

Atlanta led 7-0 in the seventh but the lead had dwindled to 8-6 when Melancon replaced Josh Tomlin with two outs in the bottom of the ninth after Corey Seager's RBI double and Max Muncy's two-run homer.

Albies extended the game with a fielding error on Will Smith's grounder to second before, and reigning NL MVP Cody Bellinger hit an RBI triple. Melancon induced AJ Pollock to ground out to third, ending the 4-hour, 12-minute game.

"I didn't feel good with a big lead because these guys are too powerful, and that's a good ballgame to win. They all are now," manager Brian Snitker said. "We kind of shot ourselves in the foot there at the end. Melancon did a great job coming in."

Rookie Ian Anderson extended his postseason scoreless streak in an abbreviated start as the Braves moved within two wins of their first World Series appearance since 1999. All previous 14 teams to win the first two games of a best-of-seven NLCS went on to claim the pennant.

Only seven weeks after his big league debut with the Braves, Anderson has pitched 15 2/3 scoreless innings and is only the second pitcher in major league history to start his postseason career not allowing a run in three consecutive starts of at least four innings.

"They're not going to give up. We have to treat tomorrow like the first game of the series and come out strong," Melancon said. "There's no reason for either club to take their foot off the gas. ... Nobody has won anything yet."

Freeman put the NL East champion Braves ahead to stay with a two-run homer in the fourth off rookie Tony Gonsolin, who filled in after three-time NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw was scratched because of back spasms. Freeman added an RBI single as part of a four-run outburst an inning later.

Game 3 is Wednesday night, when 24-year-old playoff veteran Julio Urías starts for the Dodgers, seeking to win their third pennant in four seasons. Kyle Wright, another rookie right-hander, is on the mound the Braves, who have outscored opponents 37-12 in the playoffs.

"This team's got a lot of fight. We've done it all year," Seager said. "We were one swing, one anything away from tying that ballgame and going into extras. This is a long series. We're looking up to the challenge."

Freeman was hit on his right elbow by Alex Wood in the eighth and was shaken up but stayed in the game.

"Stung him pretty good and he lost feeling," Snitker said. "But I think after he got through that inning and came back in, he got all of his strength back. He should be OK."

Anderson allowed one hit and struck out five, but walked five while throwing 85 pitches in four innings. The 22-year-old right-hander did not come to for the fifth after Braves batted around in the top of the frame and built a 6-0 lead while tying a LCS record with four walks in the inning.

"We had a good game plan, and in the playoffs you just have to keep guys from scoring and we were able to do that," Anderson said. "As long as we keep winning ballgames here. ... It's good to be up 2-0, and we get back to work tomorrow."

Los Angeles, which had the best record in the pandemic-shortened season, trailed by seven until Seager's three-run homer to greet A.J. Minter in the seventh.

Ronaldo COVID-19 positive test a wake-up call

AP
Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal reacts during their UEFA Nations League group stage match against France at Stade de France, on October 11, 2020 in Paris, France.

PORTUGAL (AP)—The news that Cristiano Ronaldo has tested positive for the coronavirus probably won't be seen as a warning in global sports' ongoing and unrelenting effort to play their way through the world's biggest health crisis in a century. But it should be.

It's not that Ronaldo, the best-known athlete and one of the most famous people period to have contracted COVID-19 so far, is any less likely to fully recover than the other boldface jocks who have been infected before him. Like Kevin Durant or Zlatan Ibrahimovic, he'll almost certainly be fine.

What should have sports executives shuddering in their expensive shoes is the timing of Ronaldo's diagnosis. Some may not have noticed it yet, but things are getting hairy again in a hurry out there. And they're probably going to get worse before they get better.

While the NBA, the NHL, WNBA, MLS and the NWSL proved that restarting their leagues inside tightly controlled bubbles was safe, there's now a mounting body of evidence that operating big-money team sports without such preventive measures leads to big problems. And while those problems have mostly been manageable so far, that might not be the case for much longer as the second wave of the pandemic begins to crest across the globe.

The NFL started off great. Then coronavirus outbreaks within the Tennessee Titans and New England Patriots organizations created a ripple effect that has already forced the NFL to tweak the schedules of eight teams, with two-thirds of the season still to play. Another bundle of postponements could end up pushing back the Super Bowl.

Baseball's 2020 campaign got off to such a rocky start—a slew of outbreaks across several teams nearly shut the whole thing down days after it started—that it wisely created bubbles for the playoffs and World Series.

More than 30 top-level college football games have been postponed so far. And in MLS, the Colorado Rapids have seen their last seven matches called off, with no time to make up more than two of them before the regular season concludes on Nov. 8.

All across sports, it's a mess already. Soccer seems particularly vulnerable to major interruptions in the weeks to come, largely because of FIFA's typically idiotic but totally expected decision to allow national teams to convene for games in every corner of the planet over the last two months, pandemic be damned.

Ronaldo's diagnosis was announced by the Portuguese Football Federation while he was on international duty. But it seems likely that he was infected before he left Italian club Juventus, where two staffers had tested positive. All of Ronaldo's Portugal teammates tested negative on Tuesday, but after constant exposure to him over the last week, how many of them will return a confirmed positive test in the days to come? How about Eduardo Camavinga, the French teenager Ronaldo gave his jersey to following last week's tilt against Les Blues?

Two players from Peru, including Seattle Sounders striker Raúl Ruidíaz, will miss Tuesday's World Cup qualifier against Brazil after contracting COVID-19. It is now unclear if Ruidíaz will be able to return to the United States as scheduled, or how many games he might miss for the defending MLS champs. This is the exact situation MLS wanted to avoid before it reluctantly agreed to release its players to their countries this month.

How many other players will return to their clubs from this week's World Cup qualifiers in South America, one of the hardest-hit regions of the world in terms of fatalities, or from Nations League matches across Europe, where cases are spiking again, unknowingly carrying the virus? If games in the Premier League or La Liga or Bundesliga are impacted, clubs are going to wig out.

The return of sports has been a welcome distraction for so many people in so many ways during this terrible year in all of our lives. But the Ronaldo news should serve as a reality check, a stark reminder that another wave of pain is heading steadily toward us, if it's not here already.

The Netherlands ordered a partial lockdown on Tuesday. Spain had already imposed one on Madrid. Italy has temporarily banned amateur soccer. In England, a leading politician is calling for implementing the most restrictive measures since the spring, a plan that apparently would shut down the Prem and lower leagues for at least a couple weeks. Russia reported its highest number of COVID-related deaths on Tuesday. French officials are preparing for a surge in hospitalizations in Paris. The list goes on.

We're not quite out of this as a society. Not yet. And we're finding out that sports, as much as we want them to be, sadly aren't immune.

Rockets to interview Jeff Van Gundy for coaching job

TEXAS—The Houston Rockets are considering reuniting with Jeff Van Gundy. The team will reportedly interview Van Gundy for its head coaching vacancy Wednesday.

Van Gundy, 58, should be familiar with the organization. He coached the Rockets for four seasons. Over that period, he led the team to a .555 winning percentage. He made the playoffs three out of four years, but went just 7-12 in the postseason. The Rockets fired Van Gundy following the 2006-07 season. He joined ESPN shortly after being fired by the Rockets.

The Rockets are seeking a new head coach after Mike D'Antoni told the team he wasn't going to return. D'Antoni led the team to a 217-101 record over four seasons.

Van Gundy will have plenty of competition for the job. The Rockets reportedly already interviewed former Cleveland Cavaliers head coach Tyronn Lue on Monday, according to Stein. Lue, 43, has also drawn interest from the Los Angeles Clippers and New Orleans Pelicans.

The Rockets also plan to interview assistant coach John Lucas. The 66-year-old has six years of experience as a head coach and has been part of the NBA for more than four decades. He joined the Rockets for the 2016-17 season. Lucas has a career .401 winning percentage as a head coach.

Meanwhile, rven before Nate McMillan was fired in Indiana, D'Antoni was rumored to be the guy they wanted in Indiana. Once interviews started, Dave Joerger's name jumped to the front of the line, another coach who has had success running uptempo, modern offenses.

Now it looks like Pelicans assistant Chris Finch might be the next Indiana coach.

Finch, who started his coaching career in Europe, has been an assistant coach with the Rockets, Nuggets, and Pelicans in the NBA. He is highly respected around the league and is one of the assistants near the front of the line deserving a head coaching gig.

The Indiana job is not an easy one. There are high expectations from ownership and management. McMillan's' teams played hard and defended, something not every NBA team does, but the offense needs modernization. How big a leap this team makes may rely less on the style of play and more on if Victor Oladipo has returned to his All-NBA form.

New season

For many fans, Christmas Day is the unofficial start of the NBA season, or at least when they start paying attention. It's a showcase day of the league's biggest stars and best teams.

This year, it is looking more and more like the NBA is taking Christmas Day off. Instead, the start of next season may well be on another day the NBA has made a showcase—Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 18.

Nothing is set in stone—and that cannot be emphasized enough, the league and players' union are still negotiating everything about next season—but informed speculation has centered around that date. A couple of sources told NBC Sports that day is definitely in play to start the next NBA season.

John Hollinger, the former Grizzlies executive, talked about the Jan. 18 date.

"For starters, I've heard people in the league talking about a potential MLK date for a while, even as the 'official' word was targeting December. Logistically, this seems about the limit of how far they want to push the date back. Going any later moves the bulk of the playoffs deeper into summer and perhaps even into competing with the NFL, like it did this year. Plus, there's an accordion effect on the following season as well, at some point, the league needs to get back to something closer to its normal schedule," Hollinger said.

Hollinger added in that the league would need to give team two-months warning at least of a season start date.

Starting the season on that day and playing a full 82 games—something some owners are pushing for if they can get fans in the stands—at the regular spacing would take the season into the first week or two of July. If the league plays fewer games or compacts the schedule, both real possibilities, then the regular season could end late June, meaning the playoffs would run into September. The NBA would like to avoid conflicts with the NFL start. ***(AP/NBC)***

No go for NFL playoff bubble

NEW YORK — Aside from the obvious health impact of the NFL's COVID-19 crisis, the outbreak among multiple teams has created a complex logistical puzzle for the NFL.

League leaders addressed possible solutions to work in a full season for all teams on Tuesday, hours ahead of the league's first Tuesday game since 2010 that was prompted by the COVID-19 outbreak among the Tennessee Titans.

Solutions the league is considering? Adding an 18th week to the regular season and delaying the Super Bowl. What's off the table? A playoff bubble.

Commissioner Roger Goodell addressed reporters in a virtual news conference and emphasized the need for flexibility when asked about extending the season and delaying the Super Bowl.

"If there's one consistent theme to our year it's flexibility and adapting," Goodell said. "Flexibility is going to be critical. We will have flexibility to complete our season, but to do it safely."

NFL executive vice president Troy Vincent also spoke with reporters Tuesday and clarified the league's stance toward an 18th week. He said that the goal is to complete all scheduled games within the league's normal 17-week schedule while noting that "the 18th week is potentially an option."

Vincent also shot down the idea of a playoff bubble similar to the one that proved a success in the NBA, which just wrapped the restart of its season without a single additional COVID-19 case on its Disney World campus.

"We don't feel that is the safest course of action for us," Vincent said.

NFL chief medical officer Allen Sills likened the emotional toll of isolating players during the playoffs and around the holidays to the health threat presented by the coronavirus.

"That is just as much of a health and safety concern as COVID-19 infection," Sills told reporters.

Sills has maintained opposition to playing in a bubble throughout the league's COVID-19 planning, according to NFL Network's Tom Pelissero.

New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton has advocated for a playoff bubble on league calls. But a bubble requires planning. If the official league stance five weeks into the season is opposition, that suggests a bubble is completely off the table.

As for the Titans, who are at the center of the league's COVID-19 woes with at least 24 positive cases and under investigation for violating the league's coronavirus protocols?

"This is not about discipline, this is about making sure we are keeping our personnel safe," Goodell said. "That has been our focus to date."

AP

Tennessee Titans' Kareem Orr (36) carries the ball as Buffalo Bills' Darryl Johnson (92) hangs on in the second half of an NFL game Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn.

Titans 42, Bills 16

The Titans just put together their most gratifying victory of coach Mike Vrabel's short tenure.

They spent the past two weeks dealing with the NFL's first COVID-19 outbreak with each morning bringing news of yet another positive test. A game postponed and rescheduled with a second pushed back. Only one practice with two walk-throughs and unrelenting criticism.

The Titans remain depleted. They're also still undefeated.

Ryan Tannehill threw for three touchdowns and ran for another as the Titans routed the Buffalo Bills.

"What this organization has been through over the past couple weeks to really fight through all of that, shake it all off, really limited practice, limited reps and go out and put this kind of win together, I think makes a statement and I'm happy we were able to do that today," Tannehill said.

The Titans (4-0) continued their best start since winning their first 10 games in 2008 despite not playing playing their last game Sept. 27 in Minnesota. Coach Mike Vrabel said everyone in the organization would get a game ball after this performance.

"I learned a long time ago is the definition of a pro is they make the hard look easy, so whatever situation we're presented with we got to all come together and make the best decisions for the team each and every time," Vrabel said.

Malcolm Butler intercepted two passes, the second he returned 68 yards, and both set up short touchdowns for Tennessee. Kareem Orr's recovery of a fumbled kickoff set up Tannehill's fourth TD for 21 points off Buffalo's three turnovers. Kalif Raymond's 40-yard punt return also set up a 1-yard TD run by Derrick Henry.

"We expected to win," Butler said. ***(AP/NBC)***

FATHER

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when given the top to hop on his bike and take off and that was always the joy I had when I was a kid. I will continue to be his mentor and guide him in his motocross journey," the father of four said.

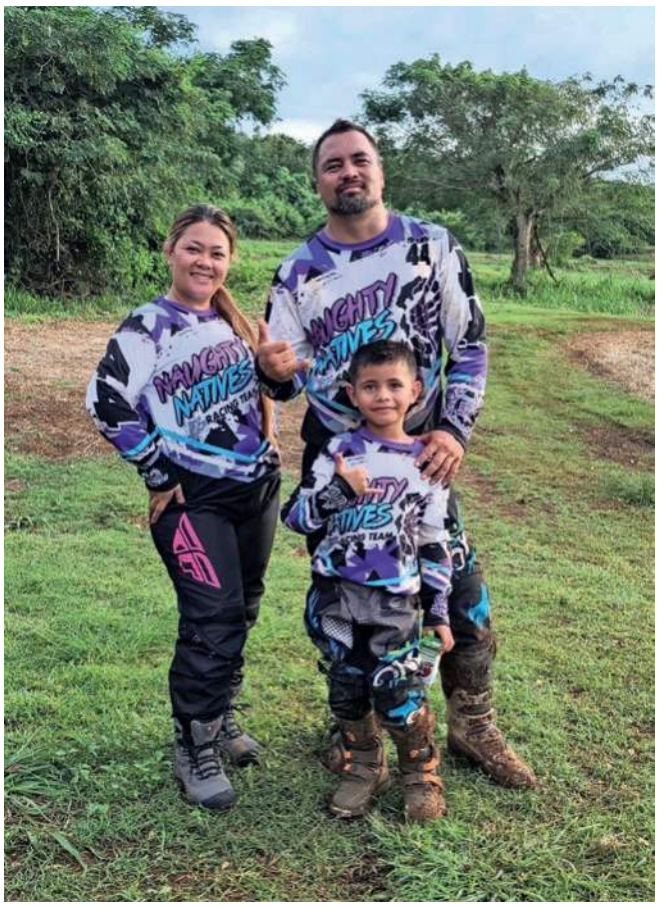
Besides his own father, Keenon has the other members of the MRA family helping him navigate his way through the sport and the Togawas are thankful for the organization that's been working so hard to revive motocross and provide riders the training they need.

"We are blessed to be with the MRA family and see familiar faces, especially people from the childhood motocross family. Having younger children join the sport just adds to the excitement, as races get better every weekend with more ideas being brought out for both the racers and the fans," Patrick said.

The veteran rider will continue to relish his moment with Keenon on the raceway, but hopes to share the track with his brothers Kiko and Joey soon just like the old days.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Patrick Togawa takes off during one of Marianas Racing Association's weekend events in Marpi.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joella Togawa, left, joins her husband, Patrick, and son Keenon for a photo before heading to the course.

REP.

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pandemic and just resumed a couple of months back.

Besides bagging the June Ace, Deleon Guerrero also made the longest drive on the par-4, 293-yard hole No. 7, while Tudela had the same feat on No. 11—a par-5, 492-yard hole.

In the closest to the pin contest, Krishnan topped the two par-3 holes—the 139-yard No. 8 and 134-yard No. 12. Teack won on the 83-yard No. 6, while Tudela prevailed on the 120-yard No. 15. Meanwhile, SGA will hold its July Ace tournament on Oct. 18 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort with tee time at 9am and show time at 8:30am.

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Father-and-son adventure

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Seeing 7-year-old Keenon Togawa imitating the stunts his father, Joey, does at Marianas Racing Association's temporary raceway in Marpi is a sight to behold for the young rider's mother, Joella.

"I am always excited when I see my boys riding, especially when they are riding alongside each other or when I see Keenon trying to do the stunts his father does. It has not only strengthened their bond, but also brought us closer together, along with our other children who are also determined to follow in their brother and father's footsteps," said Joella.

The father-and-son pair joins MRA's regular weekend races, giving the growing CNMI motocross community a glimpse of the sport's past and future. Patrick was among the active MX riders on island in the 1990s when competitions were used to be held at the CowTown Raceway, while Keenon just started with the sport a couple of months ago.

Since he is just a newbie, having his father as a mentor makes it easier for Keenon to learn his way around motocross—the first sport he took interest in. The Garapan Elementary School student added that the presence of his dad allows him to enjoy more the races he does, especially the part where he and his Mototec 49CC starter have to leap over the hilly portions of the course.

With his son now into motocross, Patrick hopes to see Kennon realize his childhood dream.

"It's very exciting to see Keenon riding because I've always wanted to see my own son follow my childhood dream of becoming a pro MX racer," Patrick said.

Keenon has a long way to go before he gets to that level, but Patrick likes what he is seeing from his son and vows to continue helping him work on his riding skills.

"Keenon's skills is improving every time he gets on his bike. He is always super stoked

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Father and son, Patrick, left, and Keenon Togawa pose for a photo before hopping on their bike during one of Marianas Racing Association's weekend events in Marpi.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Keenon Togawa tries to keep his balance as he works his way through the course in Marpi.

Rep. Deleon Guerrero gets SGA June Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Rep. Larry I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) triumphed in the Saipan Golfers Association's tournament at the Kingfisher Golf Links last Oct. 4 to take the June Ace title.

The 17-handicapper scored a 43 on the front nine of the Talafofo course and a 44 on the back for a gross 87 and net 70, giving him a three-stroke win over Das Krishnan and Alex Tudela. Krishnan, who holds an 11 handicap, posted a 39 in the first nine holes and a 45 in the last for a gross 84 and net 73, beating Tudela on the scorecard tiebreak for second place. The 10-handicapper Tudela was good for a gross 83 after drilling a 41 and 42 on the front and back nines, respectively.

With Deleon Guerrero getting the June Ace, he also earned a spot to SGA's Ace of Aces tournament (club championship), joining early qualifiers Attorney General Edward Manibusan (January), Jung Eun Taeack (February), Nick Sablan (March), Juan "Pan" Guerrero (April), and Krishnan (May). SGA has so far held six monthly competitions, as it put tournaments on hold starting in March due to the COVID-19

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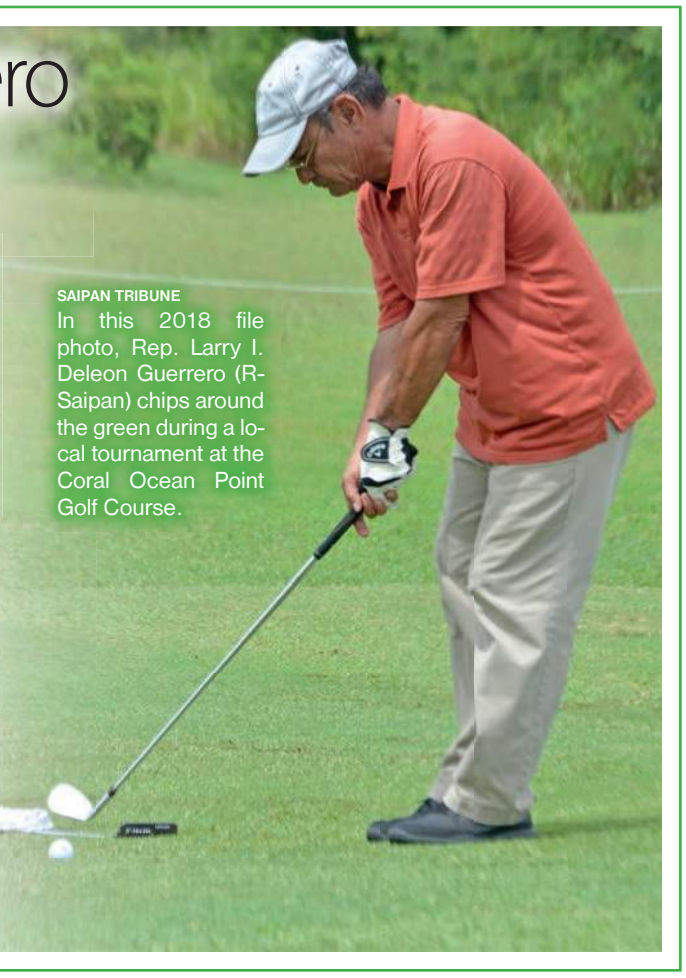

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this 2018 file photo, Rep. Larry I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) chips around the green during a local tournament at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Course.